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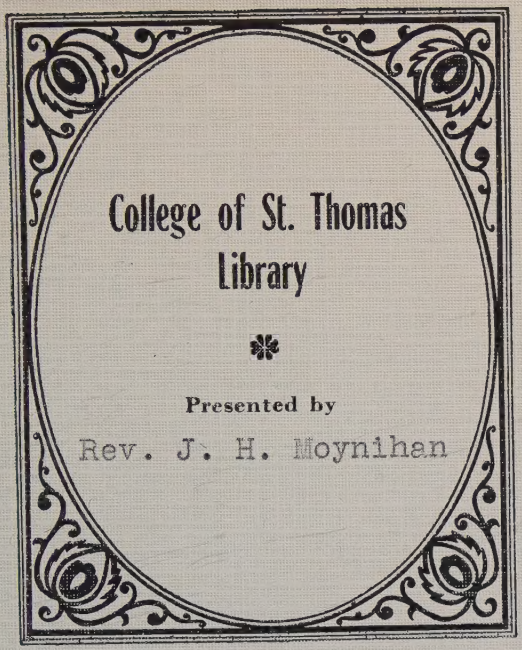

THE DILEMMA OF THE LIBERATED

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THE DILEMMA OF THE LIBERATED

An Interpretation of Twentieth Century Humanism

By GORHAM MUNSON

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"It is a commonplace of the schools that man is a little world, in which we may discern a body mingled of earthly elements, and ethereal breath, and the vegetable life of plants, and the senses of lower animals, and reason, and the intelligence of angels, and a likeness to God."

PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA.

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BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

A LETTER OF DEDICATION TO SEWARD B. COLLINS, ESQ'RE.

My dear Seward:

For two years I have cherished the wish to offer you, out of gratitude and friendship, some product of my pen. But I did not dream two years ago, or even one year ago, that I should write a book on a subject so near your heart as American Humanism. Lately, however, there has been a great acceleration of events in our country's intellectual life; unexpectedly soon the moment has ripened for a full-length study of the creative possibilities of the New Humanism. Now it is doubly appropriate to dedicate this study to you: I gratify a private desire, and I give a public recognition of the large part you yourself, as editor of the *Bookman,* have performed in bringing the ideas of P. E. More and Irving Babbitt and their colleagues before the eyes of the general reading public.

This work of yours I say is a very important service to American literature in its present condition. At no time myself an orthodox Humanist, I nonetheless felt six or seven years ago, when I first read the *Shelburne Essays* and Professor Babbitt's massive works, that here was criticism our literary world could not ignore without grave loss, and I set myself to do what I could to bring this criticism out of the academic shadows to which it had been consigned by the main romantic movement of post-war America and to advance it to the very center of

our literary stage. In this effort I was of course merely a symptom of a change in temper and direction and ideals that was gradually taking place in many young Americans who came to feel that there was something disastrously ill-informed and disappointingly shallow in the revolt-literature of the 'Twenties. At any rate, there has finally occurred in literary criticism a reaction toward "style and order," not alone in letters but in life, and we can now say that the doctrine of the New Humanists is decidedly under scrutiny by every one who professes to be seriously interested in the welfare of our literature.

Let the literary battles over Humanism go on and may they wax hotter! Strength of opposition is good for all parties concerned, and the development in our literary world of a strong orthodox classical party like the New Humanists is sure to call forth from our naturalistic thinkers and artists greater efforts, and efforts on a more difficult level of thought, than those they have felt inclined to make in the last fifteen years. But—as you tell your readers in the *Bookman*—American Humanism is not essentially or solely a literary school. It offers a comprehensive critique of modern civilization: it has studied our problems of education, politics, manners, morals, and science, as well as literary tendencies: it is preëminently concerned with the question, *how to live,* and it believes that it has the commencement of a sound program for the intelligent conduct of life.

How to live? That undying question has always given rise to hornèd problems. Walter Lippmann, not long ago, showed ably how the traditional controls of our lives

have been abolished or appear to have been abolished; with the same ability he outlined the quandaries of the modern man who has been born into the Kingdom of Whirl after the joy of breaking images has gone out of the land and no new goal for existence has shiningly presented itself. "What is there in the back of our heads," Lippmann asked, "which keeps telling us that life as we find it is not what it ought to be?" This is his reply: "It is a deep conviction that happiness is possible, and all inquiry into the foundations of morals turns ultimately upon whether man can achieve this happiness by pursuing his desires, or whether he must first learn to desire the kind of happiness which is possible." There you have what may be termed the dilemma of the emancipated man. The intelligent modern man feels liberated from petty social conventions, narrow theological views, discredited authorities, the grosser popular superstitions, but liberated for what? Only, it seems, to face a darkened problem of choices, with many strong reasons for distrusting every alternative offered. Shall he follow some most recent form of naturalism such as D. H. Lawrence preached? He is impressed by its passionateness, but it also has a fanatic sound to him; it appears to delimit man, to deny too much in man's constitution that seems to promise more abundant life to him who develops it. Shall he, on the other hand, seek out some surviving moral discipline or some new asceticism? But which one and how well founded on science and commonsense are these preserved or refurbished disciplines?

Well, the New Humanism has much to say on such

a dilemma as this, much to say on the great central moral question, how to live as a being bearing the proud-sounding name of Man ought to live; and for this reason it is proper to call contemporary Humanism a modern morality and to say that it commends itself to persons who, besides reading for pleasure or information, read to live.

It is such persons, men and women of the world who resort to books with the real intention of clarifying their lives by reading, that I wish to address. They are free from that malady to which the "literary person" so frequently succumbs, namely, living for reading and writing. This person's mind then becomes merely a great heap of literary associations, all very useful, if only he had obtained a few central ideas, if only he had kept a grip on life as the foremost thing and resolutely kept his reading in its proper place as "the great stimulus to life." The man of the world, on the other hand, has other faults, but he is sensible in what he demands of books. He wants the essentials of a doctrine and he wants them purged of special terminology: he wants to see the doctrine's practical implications lighted up: he wants to see the cardinal teachings properly groomed to appear before the bar of commonsense. That is why in the following pages I have avoided as much as possible the debates and wrangles of scholarship and have tried for compactness, clearness, simplicity, and practicality in the exposition of the master-ideas of Babbitt and More.

Truly, they are pregnant ideas. My first aim in this book has been to show their remarkable specific gravity and how they sink to the bottom of one's mind. There,

it seems to me, they give birth to questions of the utmost importance to the individual. They raise questions relating to his world-view, to his psychology, and to his aspirations in character. The mind is agitated in a new way and so led to take new approaches to old problems: the experience of past mankind and our contemporary experience operate on each other with profit in the way of self-understanding and the understanding of modern society. Many of the questions thus aroused are of a religious character, and my second object has been to discuss them and in so doing naturally to pass from the field of morals to the field of religion. Religion, "that deepest voice of human experience," according to Matthew Arnold—what has it to say of the ideals of the New Humanism and the humanistic way of life? What has religion even now to say to the skeptical modern man disposed to give ear to new moral doctrines?

In what we would reply here, my respected dedicatee, I foresee a wide divergence in our future paths. Possibly not however. But on that part of the journey which we have traveled together I wish to say I have known no other companion so gay in mind, so unswerving and unafraid in practice, so ardent in understanding of the tenets of American Humanism as you to whom this book is tendered.

In the language beloved by the Humanists of the Renascence,

Sum ut semper, tui studiossimus,

GORHAM MUNSON.

March 17, 1930,
New York, N. Y.

THE DILEMMA OF THE LIBERATED

I

THE BIRTH OF HUMANISM

> *"As is well known, the word humanist was applied, first in the Italy of the fifteenth century, and later in other European countries, to the type of scholar who was not only proficient in Greek and Latin, but who at the same time inclined to prefer the humanity of the great classical writers to what seemed to him the excess of divinity in the mediævals. This contrast between humanity and divinity was often conceived very superficially. However, the best of the humanists were not content with opposing a somewhat external imitation of the Ciceronian or Virgilian elegance to the scholastic carelessness of form. They actually caught a glimpse of the fine proportionateness of the ancients at their best. They were thus encouraged to aim at a harmonious development of their faculties in this world rather than at an otherworldly felicity. Each faculty, they held, should be cultivated in due measure without one-sidedness or over-emphasis, whether that of the ascetic or that of the specialist."*—Irving Babbitt in *Humanism and America.*

It requires an unusual effort for us to admit that there was something mysterious operating in the deeps of the Middle Ages, and again that well below the surface of the Renascence there seem to have been strange forces. We look with wonderment at the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in Europe—at that uncompleted Cathedral of the Intellect designed by St. Thomas Aquinas, at the ordering and altitude of emotion in Dante, at that philosophy of action called Chivalry; but few of us can refrain

from ready interpretations. Very few can sit in the Cathedral of Chartres and sincerely arrive at the conclusion which Henry Adams reached after long saturation beneath its influences. That conclusion, highly remarkable as coming from a modern man and therefore worthy of italic print, was given by Adams all the advantages of emphatic position. It was couched in the surprising final clause of a lengthy sentence at the end of one of his chapters in *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres,* his elaborate homage to the splendor of mediæval times. I shall let Adams lead up to it.

"Sitting here any Sunday afternoon, while the voices of the children of the maîtrise are chanting in the choir,—your mind held in the grasp of the strong lines and shadows of the architecture; your eyes flooded with the autumn tones of the glass; your ears drowned with the purity of the voices; one sense reacting upon another until sensation reaches the limit of its range,—you, or any other lost soul, could, if you cared to look and listen, feel a sense beyond the human ready to reveal a sense divine that would make that world once more intelligible, and would bring the Virgin to life again, in all the depths of feeling which she shows here,—in lines, vaults, chapels, colours, legends, chants,—more eloquent than the prayer-book, and more beautiful than the autumn sunlight; and any one willing to try could feel it like the child, reading new thought without end into the art he has studied a hundred times; *but what is still more convincing, he could, at will, in an instant, shatter the whole art by calling into it a single motive of his own.*"

But, as though in obedience to some undivined law, the marvellous unity of the Middle Ages, sustained in Adams's judgment by motives so foreign and incomprehensible to us, began to crumble. The spirit began to withdraw and the forms to change into formalism. There was less inwardness. Corruption and decline set in, and then fairly suddenly the disintegration of culture was arrested and a new growth took place to make resplendent the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The Renascence was in part a great revolt against *decayed* scholasticism and the views of man and the world it upheld, and in part the fulfilment of fresh impulses generated by the apostles of the New Learning, the study of classical literature. This period too baffles us: we meet with so many enigmatic figures! To take a famous instance, who has ever made a plausible business of explaining the character of Francis Bacon? Enigma he was and enigma he remains, a man whose range of motivation outspans our most inspired conjectures.

But this strangeness is not all that defies our efforts at understanding. We need to suspend judgment, but the difficulties of remaining in suspended judgment are magnified in a way that has been set forth by an English amateur of philosophy, the late T. E. Hulme, whose reputation in America incidentally has never matched his deserts. Authentically, Hulme was a young intellectual giant, and his death in the Great War was a grievous casualty for contemporary philosophy. But fragmentary as his writings are, one essay in his posthumous book, *Speculations,* is said to have done more to clarify the mind

of his generation in England than any other essay in recent years. This influential paper is called *Humanism and the Religious Attitude,* and some of its striking ideas are very much to our present purpose. Hulme opened by boldly declaring that the modern emancipated and instructed man shrinks from the idea of discontinuities. Such a man, he said, is wedded to the theory of evolution and the doctrine of progress, two sisters, and so he abhors the notion of a gap, a real chasm, existing in the scheme of life. In fine, the modern man takes a principle of continuity to be, not just a convenience in certain fields of thought, but an absolute fact. He therefore very frequently denies a discontinuity between Nature and Man and invariably between Man and the Absolute.

But the Middle Ages believed in a discontinuity between Man and absolute values in religion and ethics. They believed, that is to say, in Original Sin and in placing perfection far above the human plane. That is what makes those ages so hard for us to comprehend. But in the Renascence, according to Hulme, this discontinuity was denied: man was declared not radically bad, but worthy, and things perfect were brought down and mingled with things on the human plane. Where there had been the mediæval religious spirit, now appeared the modern humanistic temper—and the two were utterly different! In its later manifestations we can understand the latter, but in the Renascence, in men like Manuel Chrysoloras, Pico della Mirandola, and Leonardo da Vinci, we are haunted by the enigmatic.

What secrets they had, we cannot probe after now,

even if we had fresh clues. What is incontrovertible is that we inherit that part of the Renascence which was a revolt against mediævalism. The fifteenth century founders of Humanism gave the Western World nothing less than a new *weltanschauung*. What that world-view is and what the Romantic world-conception is which has sprung up in the last one hundred and fifty years to challenge it, I shall try to expose in the following pages. Then in the concluding chapters, after discussing Romanticism and Humanism, I wish to return to Religion and to consider the radical difference Hulme alleged to exist between the humanistic temper and the religious spirit.

When we have a single name to cover related but highly variegated phenomena, we tend after a time to think of the phenomena as being uniform because the one name covers them all. So today when an editorial writer mentions the Humanists of the Renascence, he often sounds as if he considered all of them to have been turned out on very much the same pattern. There is some excuse then for a brief collection of data showing that such was not the case any more than a rigid uniformity characterizes the Humanists of the twentieth century. Humanism now and formerly is essentially broad and flexible, and the reader must divest himself of narrow preconceptions if he hopes to encompass the subject. For dispelling a contemporary prejudice in favor of uniformity, a mere glance at the variety of fifteenth and sixteenth century Humanism will be enough, even though we take in only the best known facts.

The earliest Humanists appeared in Italy, and principally in Florence under the patronage of Cosimo de' Medici. Scholars like Manuel Chrysoloras and Poggio Bracciolini had delved into the treasures of ancient Greece and Rome and had risen ecstatically. In 1453 the fall of Constantinople released the old manuscripts in greater profusion: the new springs of life welled up gloriously. Men in the most powerful places like Pope Nicholas V became supporters of the new cult of *literae humaniores*. But as the New Learning spread, its secular spirit became more evident, and the Church found itself assaulted by some Humanists, Lorenzo Valla, for example, who stood boldly for paganism and asserted the chief good to be pleasure. Others—the most celebrated is Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494)—sought to blend Christianity with Platonism. Generally speaking, Italian Humanism had a pronounced æsthetic character, but we must not therefore think of these seminal figures in the dreamy fashion of Walter Pater. His languid essay on Pico is the least fitted thing to do justice to this man's power of inspiring others to love the New Learning. You would never guess from Pater that Pico della Mirandola was reputed to have had such a powerful mind and memory that he retained perfectly on a single reading the entire language and meaning of any text he read. Pico was only thirty-one when he died on the day the French king, Charles the Eighth, entered Florence, but he had done the work of a giant. Enthusiasts had carried his influence throughout Europe: he had fertilized an age.

In every country where it took root, Humanism as-

sumed national characteristics and applied itself to differing tasks. In Spain, in France, in England and in Germany each movement was *sui generis*—a point to remember today when we observe the classical revivals going on in France, England and the United States. The Action Française, the work of Belloc and Chesterton, American Humanism have all, in spite of many important differences, a family resemblance which will concern us later. But now glancing back at Spain in the Renascence, it is Cardinal Ximenes (1436?-1517) whom most readers will recall and his establishment of the University of Alcalá, that university from which in 1514 was to come the first Greek text of the New Testament ever printed. A little afterwards came the renowned Polyglot Bible, made under the direction of the Cardinal and published at his personal expense.

In France from the beginning Humanism was tinged with Catholic heresy. There was Jacques Lefevre of Etaples (1455-1537), whose *Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul* in 1512 is regarded as a distinct enunciation of the doctrine of justification by faith alone. There was Guillaume Budé (1467-1540), whose studies were almost entirely secular; he was excelled by no one in his time for scholarship in Greek and Latin. There was finally François Rabelais (1495?-1555?), the colossal laughing incarnation of the French humanistic spirit.

In Germany and England the Humanists appear to have struck graver notes and to have been more concerned with social reform. American Humanism today bears at least this external resemblance to the Humanism

of William Grocyn, Thomas Linacre and Sir Thomas More: namely, it is greatly concerned with public education. Perhaps the most typical English Humanist was John Colet (1467?-1519) who founded St. Paul's School in London. And American Humanism has an external resemblance to the Renascence form of Humanism in Germany in that the contemporary form is likewise primarily a movement inside the universities. The famous names in Germany are Johann Reuchlin (1455-1522), Ulrich Von Hutten (1488-1523), and the artist Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528). Reuchlin, around whom, provoked by his defence of the Jews, a storm broke that swept him for trial to Rome itself, is especially noteworthy, for he indicates by his study of Hebrew and the *Kabbalah* (a wonderful text to Pico, too) the variety of the sources of inspiration the Humanists discovered. Ulrich Von Hutten, militant pamphleteer, sided with the Protestant Reformation, whereas as is well known many Humanists liked Calvin no better than they liked obscurantist monks.

With that fact let us close what is clearly not intended to be a comprehensive survey of Renascence Humanism or an evaluation of it, but only the presentment of enough data to recall the great complexity of the early Humanists. All that is designed is to direct attention to their heterogeneity, to remember that some were against Aristotle and others favored him, some were for paganism, others for Catholicism, and others for the Reformation, some were of singular purity, others were gay worldlings in personal morals. National traits altered the colors of Humanism, and the places of emphasis, as we have seen, shifted from country to country, here being found in the

arts, there in education, and there in religious reform.

It is a warning to us—this complexity in historical Humanism—not to expect a sameness, or an exceedingly close approximation to each other, in the manifestations of contemporary Humanists. Historically, the humanistic temper was broad: we shall come to see the wide latitude of a similar temper today.

And yet historians are right in applying one name to all these diverse men from Petrarch in Italy to Luis Vives in Spain, for all felt powerfully the attraction of one leading idea. That idea the modern world has agreed to call "the dignity of man," and it is customary to go to the *Oration on the Dignity of Man* composed by Pico della Mirandola for the most eloquent phrasing of it. "Then the Supreme Being decreed that unto Man, on whom He could bestow nought singular, should belong in common whatsoever had been given to His other creatures. Therefore He took man, made in His own individual image, and having placed him in the center of the world, spake to him thus: 'Neither a fixed abode, nor a form in thine own likeness, nor any gift peculiar to thyself alone, have we given thee, O Adam, in order that what abode, what likeness, what gifts thou shalt choose, may be thine to have and to possess. The nature allotted to all other creatures, within laws appointed by ourselves, restrains them. Thou, restrained by no narrow bonds, according to thy own free will, in whose power I have placed thee, shalt define thy nature for thyself. I have set thee midmost the world, that thence thou mightest the more conveniently survey whatever is in the world. Nor have we made thee, either heavenly or earthly, mortal or immor-

tal, to the end that thou, being, as it were, thy own free maker and moulder, shouldst fashion thyself in what form may like thee best. Thou shalt have power to decline unto the lower or brute creatures. Thou shalt have power to be reborn unto the higher, or divine, according to the sentence of thy intellect.' Thus to Man, at his birth, the Father gave seeds of all variety and germs of every form of life."

Closely observed, this passage yields the following statements. Man is a being of extraordinary elasticity, for he subsumes the various kingdoms of nature, animal, vegetable and inorganic. Man is not *given* stability or a center within himself, but he may acquire them. He can do so because he has will and potentialities to develop. His dignity consists in the fact that whereas other creatures must obey their destiny, he can have an active part in forming his. His way lies between the brute and the divine: he can sink into the former or he can be reborn into the latter. To be human is to be midmost. Pico has thus written—it may be noted here—an epigraph for the New Humanism.

In passing, however, some questions should be raised. Do the New Humanists, who proclaim afresh the dignity of man, distribute the weight of their thought and emotion quite as evenly as did Pico? On the idea of rebirth, for instance, and all that it implies of revolution in personal psychology, do they not walk lightly or step carefully away from it? "The higher, or divine"—did it not tend to drop out of Renascence Humanism in its later stages, and today does it not fail to attract the best thought

or the most passionate endeavors of our Humanists? Yet all, new and old, stand for man's dignity and would agree that Pico della Mirandola has given the *poetic* formulation of their faith.

How would their faith be phrased intellectually? Happily, we may resort to T. E. Hulme for that. "It seems as if," he says, "no sooner had Copernicus shown that man was not the center of the universe, than the philosophers commenced for the first time to prove that he was. You get expressed explicitly, for the first time (in Pico della Mirandola for example), this idea of the sufficiency of natural man, and it has generally been assumed by all philosophers since. It may be expressed in very different languages and with very different degrees of profundity, but even Hegel and Condorcet are one from this point of view." The self-sufficiency of the natural man—there is a key idea we must grasp. I object to a precise equating of Hulme's phrase with Pico's eloquence on the dignity of man, but, leaving out the references to divine order and rebirth, the phrase is fairly close to an intellectual equivalent. Self-sufficiency is the central idea *we* have inherited from the Renascence, and for millions of men it has effaced the mediæval idea of the insufficiency of the natural man and the need for Grace to visit him as a basically bad creature. The dignity of man understood as the self-sufficiency of the natural man, *and by natural man is meant one not reborn,* is the foundation idea for all modern Humanism.

In the foregoing sketch I did not mention the man who is inevitably associated by every one with Renascence Humanism—Desiderius Erasmus. That was because I wish the reader to observe him now in a particular connection. Let us look briefly at the crisis in Christendom produced by the emotional revolt of Martin Luther. Up to 1521 when Luther shouted, "I should go to Worms were there as many devils there as tiles upon the roofs," Erasmus had held a commanding position in Europe. Europe was then, intellectually and morally, a single community. Latin was the common language binding together all intellectual contributions and there was one Church for all the peoples. Erasmus had risen from his illegitimate birth in Rotterdam, his convent education, and his straitness of means, to be a friendly counsellor of King and Pope, a master of Latin style, an illuminated traveler throughout Europe to exchange light with its best minds. As every one knows, he addressed himself to the emancipation of the individual, expecting that from the increase of enlightened individuals would eventually issue religious as well as social reform. The evil of the time he ascribed to ignorance: he combated it with genial raillery and suave satire, making always an appeal for truth, temperate procedure, and tolerance.

Now think of the man who was described by Erasmus in a letter "as a necessary evil in the corruption of the Church; a medicine, bitter and drastic, from which sounder health would follow." Martin Luther's career is familiar to every one; how he was severely beaten at home and at school during his childhood, how he sang

for alms at the University of Erfurt, how his friend was slain at his side by lightning and the young student's subsequent terrified flight into an Augustine monastery, how there he was distinguished by zeal, how he was disenchanted in his pilgrimage to Rome, how afterwards he was made a professor of philosophy at the University of Wittenberg, how finally he opposed Tetzel on the latter's mission of selling indulgences and dispensations and wrote out against such practices the famous ninety-five propositions which led eventually to excommunication; all these circumstances have been rehearsed hundreds of times in tones of admiration or detestation for the man who experienced them. Certainly in contrast to Erasmus's, Luther's life seems lurid. And undoubtedly the conventional Protestant account of the Reformer can stand much correction, but we need only note what unmistakably stands out in the characters of the Reformer and the great Humanist.

Carlyle had excellent reason to call Luther the Christian Odin, the right Thor: the man is impressive by his power in action, by his great and often harsh energy, by the force and sometimes violence of his feelings. He is *not* impressive because of his mind. Let us hear Luther himself denounce the reason which he grants is indeed of utility in practical affairs but refuses to call good beyond that realm. "Reason," he thundered in his last sermon at Wittenberg near the close of his life, "is the devil's greatest whore; by nature and manner of being she is a noxious whore; she is a prostitute, the devil's appointed whore; a whore eaten by scab and leprosy who ought to

be trodden under foot and destroyed, she and her wisdom." And on another occasion he said: "Reason is directly opposed to faith, and one ought to let it be; in believers it should be killed and buried." This clearly is not the accent of the Renascence Humanist who objected to pseudo-intellectualism but never to the idea that there is a right employment of reason in the highest matters. Nor did the Humanist throw his weight so vehemently upon the emotions and in particular upon faith as did Luther. "We can say," remarks Jacques Maritain, one of the best Catholic philosophers today, "that Luther is the first great Romantic"—and despite Luther's strong religious disposition, Maritain makes this remark seem plausible.

Erasmus is the antithesis to Luther. He was an active practical man, but we never think of him as an exponent of energetics; he was mature and full in his feelings, but not violent or overflowing in turbulence; he was an able reasoner but not gone mad on metaphysical refinements. What strikes us about Erasmus is not the greatness or intensity of any one of his faculties, but the fair degree of harmony in the development and operations of all of them. He is the typical Humanist because of his proportionateness. He had the supreme humanist virtue, and that is mellow commonsense.

The crisis came, and a large part of Europe followed the impassioned Luther into the Reformation. Erasmus, observing the defects of Luther, his lack of balance, his lack of reason in the best sense, could not join his forces, nor could he fight blindly and hotly on the Catholic side.

Neither was the way of mellow commonsense, and he who had been the prince of the European mind retired helplessly to Basle while the struggle worked up its violence. He had his major defect too. Not a weakling in feeling, he yet had not the tremendous force of emotion required to play an effective part in the great proceedings of history. He was even able to say in a letter to Archbishop Warham: "As for me, I have no inclination to risk my life for truth. We have not all strength for martyrdom; and if trouble come, I shall imitate St. Peter. Popes and emperors must settle the creeds. If they settle them well, so much the better; if ill, I shall keep on the safe side." But no place was safe for a champion of moderation. "Every goose," he wrote from Basle, "now hisses at Erasmus; and it is worse than being stoned, once for all, like Stephen, or shot with arrows like Sebastian."

Did Europe take the wrong turning when it ignored the pleas of Erasmus,—then past sixty, suffering with the stone, grieving over the execution of his friends, More and Fisher, a beclouded luminary,—and plunged recklessly into the work of breaking up its moral and intellectual unity? In retrospective wisdom Goethe thought so. Goethe regretted that Erasmus and men like him could not have retained the direction of the mind of Europe: he thought that Luther had thrown back the intellectual progress of mankind for centuries by appealing to the passions of the multitude to decide on subjects which ought to have been left to the learned. That question we do not have to debate here. Luther for worse or better is one of the makers of our modern world, and our press-

ing question is, what is the rôle of mellow commonsense, the great humanistic virtue, amid the confusions of our age? Should we, the heirs of those who went with Luther, now turn for light and example to Erasmus?

Fixing in our minds the several considerations dwelt on in this opening up of our subject—the absolute distinction between Religion and Humanism, the intricacy of historical Humanism, the conception of man as self-sufficient for the unifying of himself, and ripened commonsense as the prime virtue of Humanism—let us now leap to the present and examine what sort of society we belong to and how we conceive of the world and of ourselves.

II

A PORTRAIT OF OUR AGE

"A highly unified age may offer examples of highly unified personalities; but there is likely to exist in the individual of today the same confused conflict of tendencies that we see in the larger world."—IRVING BABBITT in *Literature and the American College.*

SOME Humanist yet to be, inspired by the model of Erasmus's *In Praise of Folly,* will write successfully a rival piece on our follies for the delectation of later ages. The future Erasmus will likely call his genial dissolvent *In Praise of Modernity:* in it he will conjure up the Spirit of Progress and constrain her to deliver a panegyric of all our modern excesses. But the loquacious Spirit of Progress could never accomplish that task in less space than a book, and a single chapter is our limit for a broad sketch of our age. It is not for us then to be indirect and ironical, but to find without loss of time some simple clear mirror for the reflection of the plain facts of our period. Where shall such a mirror be found? Nowhere better, it seems to me, than in the outlook on life of the typical general reader, in the outlook of such a person as G. R., whom I shall briefly describe.

G. R. in his forties is a respected and successful lawyer. In his college days he wrote verse: in fact, he was Class Poet at Commencement, but soon afterwards he lost interest in his courtship of the Muse. He continued, how-

ever, to read rather widely and with the object of keeping abreast of new developments in thought and art. You will find his name among the subscribers to the Theatre Guild and on the mailing lists of our best liberal weeklies.

As I have indicated, G. R. is successful. His comfortable duplex apartment in the east Seventies of New York city bears witness to his rise in the world, and out on Long Island he has acquired a remodelled farmhouse for week-ends and summertime. His three sons attend a private school inspired by the educational ideas of John Dewey. Their father to a casual acquaintance is not very different from some tens of thousands of other substantial well-educated American men. Like them he gets a little bored by the baiting tactics of H. L. Mencken: like them he enjoys driving a car and playing golf regularly. He still awaits being put into American fiction with the same distinctness that certain types he despises, such as the George F. Babbitts, have been limned.

G. R., now that much of his youthful idealism has been found inappropriate to the facts of his existence, has the strong impression that we are all floundering about in the present era. And this impression of his is certainly a generally diffused opinion. In a time of floundering our first consideration must be to get at the plain realities of our condition, and that is why I have recourse to G. R., on whose mind and feelings they seem most clearly imprinted. He is susceptible to the main currents of modern life, but not being unduly specialized, he does not show traces of these currents that are highly peculiar to himself.

Singularity is the fault of many explanations that are

being offered of why we are floundering and how we may take arms against our sea of troubles. These explanations come from economists, sociologists, psychiatrists, political students and other specialists. They often apply correctly to aspects of our confusion, but, coming from specialists, they necessarily tend to be recondite. And what they seek to explain and remedy, namely the easily recognized and very widespread state of mind and feeling which G. R. epitomizes, is not recondite at all. Why not then, as I have suggested, make a direct report, involving no detailed knowledge of economics or social theory, of what G. R. and the rest of us can all be aware of in terms of daily personal experience? Surely it seems best when we are floundering to imitate the Socratic example, to turn to the common mind, to trust in sound sense, before we repeat as our own the views of some specialized pleader.

What gives us all, G. R. has often inquired, this persistent feeling of blindly living along without a compass? The first part of the reply is easy. Involuntarily, we have looked to Society for a compass and it is patent that Society offers none. It has moulded us, directed us, tossed us about in its channels: that we know, and we continue to feel its multitudinous pressures every day. But Society does not show us, nor has it shown us, any central ideal for its collective self and for its individual members. Ideals there are in abundance, the ideals of professions and institutions, but a master ideal ruling over them there is not. There is competition of ideals, but no sovereign aim subordinating all other aims in life to itself. "Whirl is king, having driven out Zeus"—we need not

wonder that this has become for us a meaningful quotation.

If you are a lawyer like G. R., you live up to a code of legal ethics; if you are a physician, you encounter a standard of good medical practice; if you are a scientist, you know what the scientific ideal is: yet you do not in those professions or in other occupations or in the churches find an intelligent standard of living for all men to which common assent is given. That implies a great deal more than most people realize. It is saying that there is no central significance in the lives we are living. Society tells us of none, and there is only conflict and confusion on our most important concerns as human beings. Let G. R. ask of Society: what is the meaning of my existence? what is the true aim of my existence? Society can only reply: I am not at present organized about any answers to these questions. You must fulfil obligations to me, but I acknowledge no obligation to you as an individual in the matter of spiritual guidance. That, my dear sir, is your personal outlook. Take your choice, if you like, among a variety of conflicting opinions, but none of them have my ultimate sanction.

Of course, as G. R. often fails to remember, such a state of affairs has not always been. It was not so in ancient Palestine, not so in ancient Egypt, not so in the Middle Ages in Europe. Many times in history has Society returned to its members a full coherent reply, right or wrong, to the prime question of the individual, what is the significance and aim of my existence? It has, first of all, defined the social duties of the individual, but after-

wards it has admitted that it in turn existed to further the primary aim of the individual. Not today.

This, the complete failure of contemporary Society to declare Truth and found itself on it, is clearly the first cause of our sense of confusion. It is not that we are out of harmony with Society's declaration of Truth: it is that we know that Society is rather helplessly established on Pilate's question and certainly it washes its hands of the business. Whether it is possible or desirable for Society now to give a single answer to the question, why are we alive, is an entirely different consideration. In bringing out the fact that our Society does not hold up a standard of Truth, I would not wish to be understood as meaning that Tibet is superior to America because it is unified in a religious way we are not. Far from that! What is being driven at now is simply the ineluctable fact that American Society does not promote an authoritative conception of spiritual life, and the result of this, be it good or bad, is competition and confusion of ideals.

Bad it may be, for if man cannot have the real thing, it is notorious he will take substitutes. We are held together not by a grand ideal which is both social and individualistic, but by a number of pseudo-ideals winning mass-acceptance. What are they? Study our national behavior, and because it is obviously standardized you will have no trouble discerning what our brazen images are.

G. R.'s mind, for example, is typical of most of us in that it is soaked in the dogma of social progress. A very compact statement of this dogma was once given in the process of criticizing it by Robert Shafer, one of the New

Humanists. "Social progress has become," he said, "a species of popular religion of which the chief articles of belief are: that earthly life is in and for itself a good thing, that terrestrial happiness is possible for all men, that applied science and industry have given us the means for abundant enjoyment, and that it is now the task of social science and government so to order our common life that toil shall not rest heavily upon any of us and that the means of enjoyment shall be equally open to all. It is, moreover, generally believed not only that terrestrial happiness is possible for all men, but that it is infallibly coming to pass—that is, that social science and government are bound to succeed in their task."

That this is really our credo, our actions as well as our words testify. We say nowadays that we "accept life." Why we accepted it and for what we accept it, we do not clearly know; so we say that life in itself is good. Our actions furthermore make us all out to be believers in the attainment of widespread terrestrial happiness. Our forefathers may have dreamed about laying up treasure in heaven, but not we. For we can point with great faith to a means for abundant enjoyment here and now: we point to applied science and industry. They are to reduce toil for us, toil, we are quite sure, being a main cause of unhappiness. With more leisure we shall be happier, for then we shall be able to amuse ourselves, as we say, and to enjoy comfort.

But how external all this is! Precisely. For some reason we feel that the way to improve man is to improve the environment by means of applied science and the bet-

ter organization of industry. This, we think, will increase the sum of happiness. It does not matter whether we are captains of industry or social rebels: we are both thinking in terms of changing the environment, and neither of us has even a faint perception of a simultaneous need to improve man directly by an inward transformation. That is why I call the doctrine of social progress, whether it is framed by a member of the Republican party or of the Socialist, a pseudo-ideal, for it promises only more leisure, not a use of leisure conducive to human happiness. It does not implant a new motive in us but inspires the belief that our old motives will receive fuller scope for action, and by so receiving this larger scope, we shall be made happy.

So the environment is the focus of our energies. We aim to complete our conquest of Nature, as we say. But in the process of subduing the natural world, we have, many people believe, got ourselves organized into an intolerable plutocracy. This scheme of social organization must be revised or transformed to give better opportunities for material enjoyment to all members of society. Then, and only then, so the meliorists of environment and society assure us, will it be possible for the individual to work directly at self-improvement.

It is worth repeating the question of the individual under any and all conditions of human existence. I will do so in the words of the late Stuart P. Sherman, who as a thoughtful young man went to Society and books with the question that comes to all thoughtful young men, "Is life worth living, and for what purpose?" He found, as

we all have found, no grandly framed answer by Society to this question, no consensus of all intelligent men today, no reply that appealed at the same time powerfully to the mind and the heart and was furthermore associated with a practical way of life. Sherman then gave up the question and, as if under hypnotic suggestion, put forth another, "Assuming that life is worth living, what are its durable satisfactions?" Under hypnotic suggestion, I said, for in truth our relation as individuals to Society should not be described as a reasonable one but as that of subject to hypnotist. An answer to the first question, is life worth living, and for what purpose, is not to be plucked down from our social atmosphere, but our air swarms with the assumptions that life *is* worth living, that it is good in and for itself, that terrestrial happiness is possible. We have not to question the basis of life but only to discover durable satisfactions.

But Society as hypnotist rules us in this search too. We all become members, it appears, of the cult of distractions and comfort. No? Look again at what we actually do, observe our national behavior. Sherman did just this: he said, in pursuit of his second question, let us see what Americans spend their money for, since we spend for what we believe in, since our expenditure is an act of faith. Well, he found that we as a nation spend heavily for plumbing, for bodily health, for university education, for automobiles, for organized athletics, and for advertising and publicity purposes. He put, it is true, an optimistic and sentimental interpretation on these facts. What his list shows, however, is that our center of gravity

is in the practical life, and that we are addicts to the pursuit of comfort and pastimes. "I can't think," said Sherman, referring to college sports stadia-building, "of any more significant architectural phenomenon since the cathedral building of the Middle Ages"—nor can I, but I am thinking of the differences in purpose, worship and appeal. We idolize baseball players and boxers, not saints and artists and sages.

Are not these pithy words of Frank Jewett Mather true? "What is in America our accepted vision of the good life? For upon it must rest our art. What do we all agree to (saving always negligible minorities of 'knockers')? I fear it would come to these few articles of faith:—to make a lot of money by fair means; to spend it generously; to be friendly; to move fast; to die with one's boots on. This is a credo which has within its limitations positive merits, and it is by no means lightly to be decried, but it palpably offers little spiritual nourishment to the 'art-artist,' to quote a recent mayor of New York. A certain kind of art it feeds admirably. And it naturally gets the art it feeds—the immaculate bank clerk in campus clothes, the sylph-like apparition in the porcelain tub, the beach party in the classy car—the art of the advertisement generally. And this ideal also finds its authentic expression in the cheap heroics and shallow idealisms of the moving picture, and the potpourri of dubious music and eloquence over the radio. These are our representative arts, as sculpture was the representative art of Greece, or painting of Florence."

Thus far our search for the plain facts of our present

floundering condition has led us to a paradox: we lack any standard of a good, a noble life, yet we are amazingly standardized in our lives. Finding no common vision of what life ought to be conducted for, we fall prey to exceedingly powerful social suggestions. We behave, first of all, as if the machinery of existence, the getting of a living, were an all-important end in itself. And on the margin left free by practical affairs we look for a good time, we try to be neighborly, we increase our comfort.

G. R. is entangled in this paradox: at the same time he falls into the conventional modes of American behavior, he protests against them: he decries the lack of a common luminous standard for life and yet does not set himself to search for one. He continues to flounder unhappily.

Some of G. R.'s psychological biography is now relevant. At one time a large part of his mind was under the control of a certain view of the world which I shall personify as "the Sunday School boy." Later "the Sunday School pupil" at the back of his brain was supplanted by "the village atheist," the personification of the world-view G. R. now holds. Both these characters in his brain are elusive, capable of many disguises, and below the surface. One must go stealthily to capture them.

Every human being, even the least philosophic man, is compounded of two attitudes, an attitude toward the world and an attitude toward himself. The latter seems more native, less educable, than the former. Of our picture of ourselves we are almost never aware, and even when in rare instances we come to realize what the pic-

ture is, it seems impossible to change it. We can only sometimes correct its influence on our actions and feelings, but we go on habitually conceiving of ourselves as before. Our attitude toward the world, on the other hand, seems to derive from education and to be susceptible of change. A world-view of some sort we must have, but the particular one we receive, often unconsciously, is, as people say, "wished on us," usually when we were children. G. R. illustrates a change in world-conceptions, passing as he did from the dominance of "the Sunday School pupil" planted early in his mind to the later dominance of "the village atheist," installed there in his twenties. But let us ask some general questions first.

What attitudes toward the world are characteristic of ourselves and our contemporaries? That is, what are our chief emotional states in regard to that immense given object, the world? What are our imaginations of life? An interesting enumeration of some of them was given a few years ago by a practical psychologist. "There is," he said, "the 'Puritan' picture which represents life as a hard and narrow school. This evokes the attitude of the nervous schoolboy in the constant presence of the stern dominie. There is the 'Pagan' picture of life as an orgy of Greek gods inviting men to drink and feast with them. There is the 'Serious' view of life which imagines 'God' to be struggling against almost hopeless odds for the redemption of matter. The emotion or attitude evoked is one of 'helping poor father.' There is the 'Scientific' view that sees life as an orderly insignificance, all dressed up but with nowhere to go. There is the 'Æsthetic' view in

which life is an artist making and exhibiting works of art, with man as the appreciative witness. And so on."

But which of these and other unlisted world-conceptions are most conspicuous in intelligent American society today? I think they are the two that G. R. has been victimized by; one asserts the universe to be purposive and meaningful to man, the other declares the contrary. The first for convenience we can call the Victorian world-view, and the second the "Scientific" view. Both when stripped bare seem pretty absurd, yet who will say that we, even when we recognize the puerile character of our governing conceptions, do not go on being dominated by or at least being considerably influenced by absurdities? It is not easy, any one who has tried will testify, to overcome our early education.

Consider the Victorian world-view which is implanted in most people brought up like G. R. in one of the Protestant churches. H. G. Wells has sought for thirty-five years to shatter it. His procedure has been to delineate its formation time and again in his novels and then show how impotent it is to face a really hard blow from circumstance. From *Mr. Blettsworthy on Rampole Island,* for instance, I can quote a very neat description of the present-day Protestant *Weltanschauung* as it is popularly held, but in this form who but a very honest man will see that something very like it underlies much of his opinions about life?

"God began afresh with me in England," says Mr. Blettsworthy in reference to his boyhood, "as the confederated shadow of my uncle, a dear English gentleman of

a God, a super-Blettsworthy in control, a God of dew and bright frosty mornings, hopeful and unresentful, whose peculiar festivals were Easter and Christmas and the Harvest Thanksgiving. He was the God of a world that was right way up, stern only to smile again, and even through the solemnity and restraint of Good Friday peeped out my uncle's assurance that the young gentleman would come back safe and sound on Sunday. A serious time, of course, occasion for grave reflections, but meanwhile we had our hot cross buns. . . .

"He was awfully decent, was God, as his uncle displayed him, and he and my uncle made me want to be decent too. In a world of 'All right' and 'Right O' and 'Right you are, Sir.' . . .

"My uncle shook back the sleeves of his surplice and leant smiling and persuasive over the pulpit, making everything clear and mild like English air, and I felt that if I were given a vision sufficiently penetrating I should see high above the blue ether another such kindly Father, instructing his fortunate world."

Considering the results of the recent research by Dr. Angus Hector MacLean of Columbia University into the ideas about God of Protestant children, Mr. Blettsworthy's account is more than fair toward what we learn in Sunday School. Furthermore, since most of us never give any serious thought in later years to Religion, we never learn very thoroughly what a travesty of the religion of Christ our instruction has been. We take it naïvely for something like the genuine thing. We may vary or subtilize the picture, trying to make its anthropomorphism less

crude, but in essentials it remains the same. A fatherly personage rules the universe and we are his darling concern. At the back of our minds there is still a "little Sunday School pupil" piping up in adult's language that the world runs on a benevolent principle and that we should therefore be altruistic toward our neighbors in imitation of the divine principle.

But it is possible for many people by an extension of their reading to exorcise this "little Sunday School pupil" and to install in his place what I can only designate as "the village atheist." Once this oddity is established there, we react to life according to the dictates of the "Scientific" imagination of it. In this view there is only one kind of real knowledge, and that is modern science: there is only one sanction for knowledge and that is bestowed by the scientist. All art, all religion, all morals, all philosophy must bow before the final authority of science. They do not yield us other and different knowledge of the world, valid in its own way, but they are purely fictive unless backed up by the arch-critic of all contemporary culture, the scientist. "This is a scientific age," says G. R. to his friends who still continue to speculate about religious matters.

This point, our exclusive reliance on scientific investigation and thought for the truth about things, needs no stressing. It is one of the preëminent signs of the modern mind. We do not take seriously the kind of knowledge offered by art, for instance, and in fact we do not call it knowledge at all. But it needs to be repeated again, for we continually forget it, that modern science is carried on

by intensely specialized men whose activities are understandable to only a few hundreds and who do not popularize their doctrines. In many cases indeed, the various theories of quantum for one, these activities are extraordinarily hard to render into the idiom of the world. So it comes about that the many intelligent men who have adopted the "Scientific" view are actually just as Victorian as those who retain a sentimental "religious" life-picture. For their "Scientific" view is forty or fifty years old, going back to such famous and gifted populiarizers as Huxley and Tyndall. By it they believe that the world is a vast mechanical concern, thoroughly materialistic, orderly and eventually knowable, but without purpose, and in this world man is an accidental form of life. He is alien to the world, and it is indifferent to him. How old-fashioned this is! Does it not bring to mind the discussions of some provincial group of tight-minded atheists set on combating the conventional propaganda of latter-day Christians? Yet, though the advanced physicist has forsaken this world-conception, it persists in many persons today who fancy themselves as intellectually "free."

G. R., for instance, picks up the latest *Nation* the postman has brought to his door and there in a feature article of one of our most intelligent weeklies, he reads: "It (the natural world) is a system if not with any purpose at least with an order. . . . Man is a half happy but, historically considered, quite explicable accident." Now what is that but saying over again to G. R. what the Victorian scientist said in effect to G. R.'s father—the universe is all dressed up but has no place to go? Yet these sen-

tences are by a professor of philosophy in a large university who is regarded as *au courant* with the latest developments in thought. By this you may see how beneath a considerable surface complexity in the modern mind there may lie major assumptions of an astonishing naïveté. There is indeed a "village atheist" in many of us who controls our emotional state toward the world, and we shall have a great deal of trouble to dislodge him.

The truth is that neither the Victorian world-outlook nor the "Scientific," nor the "Pagan," nor the "Æsthetic," nor any other of the world-outlooks subscribed to in the present time by minorities inspires a creative emotion toward life. But of that, a creative world-conception and its corresponding attitude, more is to be said in a later chapter.

Perhaps we shall make a better case for ourselves if we examine our chief current conceptions of man. After all, nothing obviously is closer to us than our organisms: we may find that the world at large is a receding object for speculation, but who can be oblivious of the intimate bonds existing between what we call our "ego" and the manifestations of our personality? It is a truism (which we are always trying to forget) that we are attached by self-love to the strange being that bears our name, and it is furthermore known that self-love falls into a certain number of stock forms or attitudes toward oneself. Into these we need not go now: they fall more logically into the psychologist's province. But it is pertinent for us to take

up certain large conceptions of man which have a great hold on us, and deeply color our self-attitudes.

To begin with, a very large party, probably the most numerous in fact, thinks of man as existing wholly within Nature. By this its members mean that man contains naught of the supernatural: on the contrary, his psychology belongs as much to Nature as does his physiology. He rises out of Nature, but does not transcend it. There is no special law for man as distinct from law for thing: man is utterly material: the old doctrine of the soul's immortality is a delusion. Browning has sung for them:

> Let us not always say,
> "Spite of this flesh today
> I strove, made head, gained ground, upon the whole!"
> As the bird wings and sings,
> Let us cry, "All good things
> Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul!"

But this party which as a whole denies the existence of any radical discontinuity between Nature and Man is itself divided into a sentimental and a scientific faction, and both have representatives in the schools of psychology. The Freudian psycho-analyst will do very well as a spokesman for the sentimental naturalists, and for the scientific naturalists the Behaviorist is perfectly ready to offer his conclusions.

It happens that G. R. belongs to the former persuasion: he has been twice psycho-analysed and the stock he takes in the process can be gauged by the considerable expense

he has put himself to. He is convinced that we have a kind of bastard soul, the "unconscious" or as most people prefer to call it, the subconscious, which is a basic conception in the teachings of the Freudians. This bastard soul is dynamic, not merely the residue of the impressions which we have either forgotten or received unawares, and it works its will deviously upon us. The important thing is to become aware of its modes of operating and to keep them from being perverted by false education and false social notions. Repressions and suppressions are, on the whole, mischievous, though sometimes necessary. The mind furthermore is suspect. It fools us by rationalizations: it oftentimes aids in unhealthy sublimations.

G. R. therefore seeks to free his impulses and to follow them spontaneously. He has turned anti-intellectual and tries to establish himself upon his instincts and his feelings without interference from his mind. He trusts in his "unconscious" which he believes to be innocent and naturally good in the old sense of Rousseau. That is why we may term G. R. a sentimental naturalist, for the mark of the breed is its faith in the essential goodness of man and its contention that the environment alone is to blame for the spoiling of man.

At the present time, G. R. is hostile to the scientific naturalist, not on the fundamental ground that man is entirely within Nature, but because the Behaviorist drives out sentiment about the inherent goodness of man. To the Behaviorist man is a doomed creature. He is the product solely of biology and sociology, will-less, an automaton, purely a response-mechanism. His conscious-

ness is doubted, though his complexity is granted. But it is the complexity of a machine. G. R. finds it difficult to refute the Behaviorist's laboratory experiments, but his "mystic" faith in the "unconscious" insulates him against the terrible conclusions of Dr. Watson and his co-workers. Nor does he like the phrase, "the indignity of man," which the New Humanists use for the conceptions of psycho-analyst and Behaviorist alike.

It may seem to some readers that I have overdrawn this portrait of a typical child of our age. But we must not mistake complexity of thinking for thought itself. An elaborate superstructure may rest upon a few naïve assumptions. I have tried to get below the superstructure and there I find a man who leads a standardized life due to the manipulations of Society, who either returns to his mother's knee when he looks at the world or else regurgitates the stale conclusions of Victorian materialism, who conceives of himself as being naturally good if only he can return to the state of Nature or else he conceives of himself as purely mechanical—and it is impossible to exaggerate either this man's ignorance of what life may mean or his lack of creative emotion toward the world and himself. His leaders, for all I can see, only subtilize his blindness, but they are stricken in the same way. It is true, one can confidently affirm of our epoch at least, that as A. N. Whitehead observes, "The mentality of an epoch springs from the view of the world which is, in fact, dominant in the educated sections of the communities in question." Our leaders and this poor stock figure G. R. live

in the same climate of opinion: they have shaped him, it is obvious, but what is not so immediately clear is that they have also sprung from him.

This at any rate is incontestable. Our age is not rich in individuality as the Renascence was. The Renascence type—the master of many arts, the all-round or universal man—does not flourish with us. And the reason? Once we peer well inside our psychology, it is apparent that we are aimless and uncreative, and that, I think, is sufficient explanation.

The New Humanist is against the psychology of modernity. He stands for another kind of man which I shall try to portray in the next chapter.

III

THE MAN OF POISE

> *"The virtue that results from a right cultivation of one's humanity, in other words from moderate and decorous living, is poise. Perfect poise is no doubt impossible: not even Sophocles succeeded in seeing life steadily and seeing it whole. The difference is none the less marked between the man who is moving toward poise and the man who is moving away from it."*—Irving Babbitt in *Humanism and America.*

One turns to dictionaries sometimes to find out what sense certain terms have had for large bodies of men. There are always several definitions of Humanism that have been widely accepted, including one that covers the meaning of the word as used by American Humanists. No follower of Irving Babbitt could take exception, for example, to the definition in *Webster's New International Dictionary,* where it is stated that Humanism is "a system, mode, or attitude of thought or action centering upon distinctively human interests or ideals, especially as contrasted with naturalistic or religious interests." A more interesting definition occurs in the *Century Dictionary:* "A system of thinking in which man, his interests and development, are made central and dominant. Its tendency is to exalt the cultural and practical rather than the scientific and speculative, and to encourage a spirit of revolt against existing opinions." In the preced-

ing chapter we glanced at some of the nowadays deeply entrenched opinions supporting the "indignity of man" conception which American Humanism seeks to oust, and we may add here that the New Humanist is fighting against the raising of the scientific discipline above the literary discipline. All of us for many years have read such sentences as these: "The field of literature is notoriously the home of lost causes. Almost any antique idea, no matter how rusty and fly-blown, can pass as legitimate currency in literary circles. . . . Literary men, as a class, are surprisingly ill-informed about anything but literature. . . . The exclusively literary discipline is one of the most narrowing and least productive of all intellectual disciplines": and we have wondered under the spell of their confidence if we too should not be a little contemptuous of the offerings of literature to the modern man, rejoicing in them perhaps with a kind of secret shame, while we reserve our serious attention for the latest researches in anthropology and Gestalt psychology. Only, sotto voce, have we observed this alleged reluctance on the part of literary men today to embrace new scientific speculations? On the contrary, they seem, most of them, to be much more prone than genuine scientists to accept the latest guesses as "discoveries." The New Humanist like the genuine scientist has not much applauded the "guess-sciences," such as psycho-analysis, for from his training he has formed the stubborn conviction that the great literary masters were *not* naïve men but quite the opposite, and divined more about the essential constitution of human nature than modern science has yet been able to disen-

tangle. The New Humanist is even prepared to maintain in the teeth of the multitude shouting of "progress" that perhaps modern culture is a retrogression, and we need not think that the growth of a scientific mentality is a compensation for the decline of commonsense, the weakening of feeling, the decay of action as an art. In fact, the contention of numerous scientific apologists for the inferiority of the literary discipline to the discipline of science is a comparatively old story to the New Humanist, reminding him of Arnold's reply to Huxley. I have it in mind soon to introduce Arnold as a model Humanist, one whose life and works may show us better than any abstract discourse what contemporary Humanism aspires to be, but it will be interesting first to look at his address on *Literature and Science*.

In that discourse Arnold marked his agreement with Huxley up to a certain point. "There is, therefore, really no question," he said, "between Professor Huxley and me as to whether knowing the great results of the modern scientific study of nature is not required as a part of our culture, as well as knowing the products of literature and art." But it is such a statement which the rabid scientific propagandist ignores when he informs his audience that Humanism is anti-science in its tendency. It is not so. The New Humanist objects not to science, but to the exaggerated prestige science has acquired in modern civilization. "Interesting, indeed, these results of science are," he will say with Arnold, "important they are, and we should all be acquainted with them. But what I now wish you to mark is, that we are still, when they are propounded

to us and we receive them, we are still in the sphere of intellect and knowledge." Science is taken by the New Humanist as a great arm of the human spirit, a magnificent intellectual weapon forged for ascertaining the *whatness* of things, but still only as one of the great arms of the spirit along with philosophy and art and religion; and now we can bring forward Arnold's justification for the literary discipline, the reason for his claim that "letters will call out their (mankind's) being at more points, will make them live more" than an education carried on mainly in the natural sciences.

It is because literature is not confined to the sphere of intellect and knowledge, but is concerned with the relationship between that sphere and the other spheres of a man's life, the sphere of beauty, the sphere of conduct. It is like dancing which has a regard to the total harmonious action of the body as contrasted with exercises like weight-lifting designed solely to increase strength. The scientific discipline is concerned with knowing, the literary with connecting knowing with feeling and doing. Truth is the prize of the scientist; truth, beauty and goodness the prizes of the man of letters. Thus, it may be said that the function of the literary culture is to sum up all other existent cultures, to gather them in and sweeten their language, and finally to relate their findings to the total being of man.

Arnold beautifully exemplified this relating power gained from the study of letters when he declared that "we shall find, as a matter of experience, if we know the best that has been thought and uttered in the world, we

shall find that the art and poetry and eloquence of men who lived, perhaps, long ago, who had the most limited natural knowledge, who had the most erroneous conceptions about many important matters, we shall find that this art, and poetry, and eloquence, have in fact not only the power of refreshing and delighting us, they have also the power,—such is the strength and worth, in essentials, of their author's criticism of life,—they have a fortifying, and elevating, and quickening, and suggestive power, capable of wonderfully helping us to relate the results of modern science to our need for conduct, our need for beauty. Homer's conceptions of the physical universe were, I imagine, grotesque; but really, under the shock of hearing from modern science that 'the world is not subordinated to man's use, and that man is not the cynosure of things terrestrial,' I could, for my own part, desire no better comfort than Homer's line which I quoted just now, 'for an enduring heart have the destinies appointed to the children of men.' "

Let that stand as all the defence required for the *utility* of the literary classics in a scientific age. But it is a temptation to add further words of explanation, especially when one has at one's elbow persuasive quotations from Arnold on other aspects of the discussion. Who has ever better stated the social office of literature than Arnold in *Culture and Anarchy* when he says: "The great men of culture are those who have had a passion for diffusing, for making prevail, for carrying from one end of society to the other, the best knowledge, the best ideas of their time; who have labored to divest knowledge of all that

was harsh, uncouth, difficult, abstract, professional, exclusive; to humanize it, to make it efficient outside the clique of the cultivated and learned, yet still remaining the *best* knowledge and thought of the time, and a true source, therefore, of sweetness and light."

Literary culture then relates one power of our being to another, and it humanizes knowledge by putting it into the clear, supple and beautiful idiom of the world. By doing the second, it makes our knowledge ready for a third operation: it makes it ready for trial by the commonsense of mankind. What errors are revealed when an imposing jargon is at last made over into transparent writing, and what truths recommend themselves with overwhelming authority when at last they are spoken in the world's tongue! To be passed by the commonsense of mankind is the highest seal of truth we can know. The friends of literary culture are right in their main contentions for literature's great value. But let me here repeat there is naught in American Humanism *as a doctrine and an attitude* that denies the restricted utility of modern science to the modern man in his struggle for firm ground on which to plant his feet in this rocking age. At another place we shall have to examine the conclusions of individual American Humanists concerning scientific doctrines. But now, in the endeavor to visualize Humanism in practice, let us look more closely at the figure of Matthew Arnold, who was so eminent an exponent of the literary life.

The first point I wish to make about Arnold is an unfashionable one just now, and therefore not easy for many people to appreciate. Arnold's life, externally considered, was typically middle-class and ordinary. The son of the famous Dr. Thomas Arnold of Rugby, he went up to Oxford, where he distinguished himself by his verse, and afterwards faced the common problem of making a living. This problem was complicated, as is the common case, by his desire to marry, and he solved it in the ordinary way by taking a position that was not altogether congenial, was in fact irksome, but did enable him to wed Miss Lucy Wightman. Thereafter, he raised a family, and became a member, though a critical one, of the great political and religious institutions of his country. He traveled, he lectured, and he meditated and wrote on matters of wide public interest. There were no exciting physical adventures in his life, no grand crimes of passion, no flaunting colors, no great upheavals of circumstance: in short, his was a representative life and, to an unsympathetic eye, a commonplace one. It was at the other pole from *la vie bohême*.

There are certain advantages not often reckoned in leading a life of conformity, such as Arnold's outwardly appears to be. But to forestall misunderstanding of my point, I must say that I personally see no virtue in conformity itself, nor in non-conformity by itself. The first is worthless when set up as an ideal, and since the second is only a turning inside out of something worthless (the old illustration of the resemblance between the hollow and the bump comes to mind), it too is of no value: non-

conformity for the sake of non-conformity is stupid. No; virtue resides all in the aim and spirit with which one conforms or rebels: the important question is *how* one lives within the conventions or outside the pale. It is purpose, not pattern, that is radical.

But it so happens—and this is among the certain advantages referred to—that a man who leads a life typical of the millions of middle class mankind is automatically insured of a greater breadth of normal experience than is the bohemian flouter of institutions. The former experiences the common lot of man: a sense of family responsibility, touch with the main life of his community, actions within institutions greater than himself, and so on. The latter often becomes a kind of specialist in eccentric experience. He may be, and often is, of extraordinary gifts, but subtraction must be made for limitation of his experience, for specialization in certain directions, for eccentric psychology. Dazzled by what is unique in him, we often fail to count the price he has paid, his missing the broadening and steadying effects of ordinary experience.

Breadth and steadiness—these are essential for the attainment of poise, and these requisites to a certain extent are mechanically conferred on one who lives in accord with the large customs of his society. In looking at Arnold then, let us forget that he was a Victorian, since that label is a flag to arouse our prejudices and stop our thinking, but let us concentrate on these qualities of breadth and steadiness and see how his life in its very regularity and typicality fed his purpose and attitude, for in them we shall find his genius. It is not conventionality or un-

conventionality, I repeat, that is worth a tuppence, but that counts which one can extract from living. Arnold wished for proportionateness in character and in following the middle class pattern of life, he was intelligently using it for his purpose. I do not advance this as a general proposition but in his case it was so.

How did Arnold conduct his life? We may view him successively as a thinker, a man of sentiment, and a man of practice, and in each aspect we shall see him hold himself with an admirable poise. First, his mind. Every one grants that it was an exceptionally balanced mind, and the reasons for its fine state of balance are chiefly two: the scope of Arnold's reading and the purposiveness of his studies. For what makes for an unsteady mind? Insufficient knowledge which permits one to go off half-cocked, as people say; insufficient knowledge, or as Arnold liked to put it, provincialism. Arnold was constantly on guard against provincialism both of time and place. In a famous passage he opposed them both: "Let us conceive of the whole group of civilized nations as being, for intellectual and spiritual purposes, one great confederation, bound to a joint action and working towards a common result; a confederation whose members have a due knowledge both of the past, out of which they all proceed, and of one another." But he not only immersed himself in the Occidental mind: he also, as is not common with Western thinkers, absorbed a great deal of the learning of the Orient. In other words, by a diligence that is extraordinary when it is remembered that Arnold by occupation was not a man of letters but an inspector of schools, he

carried in his head a knowledge of world literature written over a period of twenty-five hundred years that served him as a marvellous balancing pole in dealing with the transitional problems of his day as they presented themselves in politics, religion, education, social morphology and the art of literature. Breadth of reading was the first aid for him in winning intellectual balance: the second was purposiveness. For there have been many omnivorous readers who have merely, after all, passed the time because of their aimlessness. James Russell Lowell is a pathetic instance. But Arnold's duties shortened his hours for reading, and he felt he had to read, when he was free to do so, to some purpose. There is a Latin maxim—*"Semper aliquid certi proponendum est"* (always some certain end must be kept in view)—which we know he impressed upon himself. His essays are evidence that he was successful in working the maxim into his blood.

Still the mind is only the third part of a man, and mental poise can exist alongside of emotional debility and incompetence in daily affairs. Not so with Arnold, however, who impresses one almost as much by his emotional poise and his practical level-headedness as by the stability of his mind. He was a poet and is secure of a place in the history of English poetry, and this is proof positive of his strength of feeling, for time permits no man weak in feeling to stay long in the halls of Poesy. More than that, his sentiments, beginning with the personal and lyric, tended to pass into reflective emotion: that is, they broadened, became generalized, impersonal, universal, linked with reflections on the common destiny

of mankind. This represents a maturing of his emotional life. Now just as provincialism and aimlessness destroy one's mental balance, so immaturity and the inability to feel beyond one's intimate concerns upset one's emotional balance. But Arnold ripened, leaving the petty and childish behind him. He learned emotionally to stand on his own, to practice a sturdy independence. His sentiments were adult. Mark too his efforts to round out his emotional life. By disposition addicted to melancholy meditativeness, he sought—many times with success—to cultivate gaiety, to support a deeply serious view with as much charm and lightness as were fitting.

Now regard him in his practical aspect. We have seen that Arnold did not evade what the middle class man regards as his duties and responsibilities. He was a man among men, asking for no petting from society, meeting honestly by his own efforts the obligations of his lot. He never underestimated as do many modern artists the importance of conduct. Conduct, he said, was three-quarters of life, and as such man's most serious concern. "As for living, our servants can do that for us," said Villiers de l'Isle Adam, but Arnold never echoed such a sentiment. On the contrary, he not only faced daily affairs with dignity and courage, observing all varieties of men, bearing his own part, but he stressed the practical side of his writing. He wished for the best ideas to *prevail* and he took infinite pains to make them persuasive and lucid and graceful so that they would irresistibly invade men's minds and prevail. In this he is in extreme contrast with the "ivory tower" attitude which isolates art and thought

from events. The practical man wishes to make a mark in the world's business, and this decidedly Arnold aimed to do. The aim saved him from æsthetic trifling and metaphysical toying. It filled out the third side of his being.

Now perhaps we may see what is involved in the ideal of proportionateness: a threefold activity to clear the mind, to ripen and extend the feelings, to develop a practical attitude. The man of poise cannot neglect any one of these on peril of remaining lop-sided. Bias is his enemy, and against it he needs the full operation of a strong centralizing spirit in himself. Such a spirit, pervading his conduct, pervading his poetry, pervading his mind, Arnold possessed, and it is conveyed in his remark that "we are not here to have facilities found us for doing the work we like, but to make them." It is the spirit of a man who faces the natural difficulties of life with a strong will to overcome them.

We are trying to arrive at a life-like picture of the man of poise as American Humanism conceives him. I have chosen Arnold as a working model of the quality, and an imitable one as well. Naturally American Humanists vary in their estimates of Arnold, and one or two—notably G. R. Elliott—are rather harsh in their strictures, but the majority appear to find in him the prime humanistic virtues, and so it seems fair to make the use I have of his example. It is obvious, I hope, that I do not imagine I am passing all of Arnold in review, and furthermore I confess that were I not looking for a man of poise in the

recent Humanist tradition, I should never have summed Arnold up under that phrase. Poise to my mind is not the capital thing about him. Beyond the degree of most men, Arnold was a truth-seeker; and poise was to him auxiliary to the pursuit of truth. Auxiliary but necessary. For without moderating one's powerful prejudices, without attaining a fine balance and tact, without tempering one virtue by its opposite virtue, Arnold was positive that one could not see things as they are. Things, reality, are many-sided, and without the cultivation of many-sidedness in ourselves, how can we hope to approach them fairly? These words from the preface to *Essays in Criticism: First Series* set forth the right employment of poise in the great endeavor to see life steadily and whole. "To try and approach truth on one side after another, not to strive or cry, nor to persist in pressing forward, on any one side, with violence and self-will,—it is only thus, it seems to me, that mortals may hope to gain any vision of the mysterious Goddess, whom we shall never see except in outline, but only thus even in outline. He who will do nothing but fight impetuously towards her on his own, one, favorite, particular line, is inevitably destined to run his head into the folds of the black robe in which she is wrapped."

A singular fact ought to be patent from all that has been said: the man of poise is not a type, but an ideal toward which all types of men may strive. Nature makes types, but she does not make human beings of poise. She makes will-less Hamlets who, faced by a necessity to act, simply speculate and speculate, until events force them at last to

act; she makes Byrons who, on the other hand, try to force events: they act impetuously, but they reflect like children, as Goethe said of Byron. But Nature does not make the balanced, well-proportioned individual. Arnold worked on himself: he worked to perfect himself beyond the maternal care of Nature.

Thus we see that the man of poise, the Humanist ideal, is in reality a spiritual athlete. His balance and proportionateness are not gifts, such as a vein of poetic emotion or a capacity for intellectual analysis may be, but they are deliberately sought and maintained. It requires constant effort, constant activity, for him to be what he is. Modernity accepts no such ideal as the New Humanist upholds. It wants greater Hamlets, greater Byrons, greater Calibans: it wants the accentuation of types and the growth of specialism: in short, it wishes to go with the grain of Nature. But the New Humanist proclaims that the truly man-like part is to work against the grain of Nature. "It is this backward motion toward the source," says Robert Frost, the poet, "against the stream, that most we see ourselves in."

IV

THE NEW BATTLE OF THE BOOKS

> *"Our 'intellectual atmosphere,' however, is now rapidly changing, is becoming charged with new interests. More and more persons, oppressed with the stale skepticism of the post-war period, are beginning to grow skeptical of that skepticism, and are looking for a new set of controlling ideas capable of restoring value to human existence. Certain forces are making for order and for new objectives. . . . One of these forces is known as 'humanism,' which is rapidly becoming a word to conjure with."*—NORMAN FOERSTER in *Humanism and America.*

BEFORE I can treat the grounds of the New Humanist doctrine, I must turn historian and present, briefly at least, correct information about the origin and course of the movement which acknowledges Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More as masters. I am forced to this by the amount of misinformation and crude misrepresentation already widely disseminated concerning More and Babbitt and their colleagues. How this spreading of erroneous information, which now stands in our view, has come about is easily explained. American Humanism has had a quiet development for thirty-five years, making its way chiefly in academic channels and in scholarly books. Not until very recently, and then principally because of the spirited campaign waged in behalf of Babbitt and More

by the *Bookman,* has this body of thought made any strong infiltration into popular literary journalism.

Now the roving eye of the literary journalist-at-large seldom glances at anything growing up in the universities, and it missed altogether the New Humanist movement until it emerged in force in the winter of 1929-1930. Then, to his surprise, the literary journalist found himself expected by his public to say something about Humanism. He was totally unprepared to do so, but experience has given him a cynical attitude toward his public. He is the lazy tutor who does not study one lesson in advance of his pupil, but he has learned how to divert the mind of his charge, should he be asked an inconvenient question. He then makes a great play on non-essentials, he bluffs it out until the hour is over, knowing well that his pupil will soon forget both the question and the mystifying answer. To send the public off on false scents was the shift, not always adopted dishonestly, of the unprepared literary journalist when Humanism became no longer an avoidable topic. For literary journalists, it seems, are never pen-tied because of ignorance: no difficulty was experienced in promptly delivering opinions having no bearing on the facts, lacking logic, missing the real issues,—wrong opinions, in short. Myths about the New Humanism were quickly generated, giving delight to connoisseurs in the absurd, but decidedly misleading to gentleman-readers wishing simply for plain light on the new trend. However, to dispel these myths, which obstruct thought, nothing more is needed than some bald information.

It is dramatic contrast, in view of the international attention his teachings have won, to begin with a picture of Irving Babbitt * in his classroom, working obscurely, as befits an underminer of an age's basic assumptions, at his task of moulding the mind of a generation. Among the many professional writers and brilliant teachers who have come out from his courses—one may mention as a catholic selection T. S. Eliot, Van Wyck Brooks, Walter Lippmann, Norman Foerster, Gilbert Seldes, Newton Arvin—was the late Stuart P. Sherman, who has left us a roughly drawn description of his early master's wealth of mind and strength for destruction and construction.

"I knew Professor Babbitt as a graduate teacher in the History of Literary Criticism and in his Rousseau and His Influence. At that time he had very small classes—meeting around a table. He came in with a bag bursting full of books, and took out a handful of notes which he arranged around him. Began to sway in his chair, then leaped out upon one of them, and poured a barrage of criticism upon some doctrine or some line of poetry,—'to cast o'er erring words and deeds a heavenly show'—Buddha, Aristotle, Plato, Horace, Dante, Montaigne, Pascal, Milton, etc.—etc.

"He deluged you with wisdom of the world; his thoughts were unpacked and poured out so fast you couldn't keep up with them. You didn't know what he was talking about, but you felt that he was extremely in earnest, that it was tremendously important, that some

* Born in 1865 at Dayton, Ohio, graduated from Harvard in 1889, member of the Harvard faculty since 1894.

time it would count; that he was uttering dogmatically things that cut into your beliefs, disposed derisively of what you adored, driving you into a reconstruction of your entire intellectual system. He was at you day after day like a battering ram, knocking down your illusions. He was building up a system of ideas.

"You never felt for a moment that he was a pedagogue, teaching pupils. You felt that he was a Coleridge, a Carlyle, a Buddha, pouring out the full-stuffed cornucopia of the world upon your head. You were no longer in the elementary class. You were with a man who was seeking through literature for illustrations of his philosophy of life. You were dealing with questions on the answer to which the welfare of nations and civilization depended. He himself seemed to know the right answer and was building a thoroughfare of ideas from the Greeks to our own day.

"You went out of the room laden down with general ideas that he had made seem tremendously important. . . . He related for you a multitude of separate and apparently disconnected tendencies to the great central currents of thought. You carried away also a sense of the need for immense reading. He had given you theses about literature, about life, which you would spend a lifetime in verifying."

A battering ram knocking down illusions . . . myself, I like to think of Irving Babbitt as a dogmatist of the Dr. Johnson type, burly in his judgments, masculine in his sentiments, downright in manner, an unyielding hater of sophistry, a stalwart upholder of commonsense. What is

remarkable, in view of the extent of his system, is that he should have laid out at the age of thirty the ground-plan for his whole impressive structure of ideas. "The characteristic thought of Irving Babbitt," as Norman Foerster observes, "was already adumbrated in 1895 in an address at the University of Wisconsin on 'The Rational Study of the Classics,' published two years later in the *Atlantic Monthly* and in 1908 included in his book on *Literature and the American College*." Since then he has steadily developed his original thesis: confident of his foundations, he has put up a heavy, many-fronted, turreted fortress for the modern mind to retire into and survey across a moat of commonsense the giddy wheelings of the "modernists," those, that is, who make a cult of change and take change to be "progress."

But what were Babbitt's sources? His mind is powerfully assimilative and very muscular in its operations. He has applied it to world literature, east and west, ancient and modern, and naturally therefore his sources are varied. He is more Aristotelian than Platonic, however, and he takes more from Confucius than from Buddha. He feels himself at home with the rugged conservatism of Dr. Johnson and Edmund Burke, and he stands with Matthew Arnold as an urger of more Hellenism in Anglo-Saxon culture.

His more immediate stimulators in American literature seem to be Emerson and Charles Eliot Norton. Emerson as a volatile literary force arose from many elements, one of them assuredly humanistic, and from this fortifying element in Emerson Babbitt has drawn much aid to his

own spirit. It was the element which Emerson expressed in the didactic poem quoted on the flyleaf of Babbitt's first book, *Literature and the American College,* and which no American Humanist since has apparently been able to refrain from quoting some place or other in his writings. I also succumb to the poem's epigrammatic appeal and concision.

> There are two laws discrete
> Not reconciled,—
> Law for man, and law for thing;
> The last builds town and fleet,
> But it runs wild,
> And doth the man unking.

In respect to that man of truly mellow culture, Charles Eliot Norton, friend of Carlyle, co-editor with Lowell of the *North American Review,* professor of fine arts at Harvard, and celebrated Dantean scholar and translator, to him Babbitt acknowledged his indebtedness in the preface to *Literature and the American College,* written in 1907 shortly before Norton's death.* "Those who," Babbitt wrote, "during the past generation have felt the need of a more humane scholarship are indebted to him, many for direct aid and encouragement, and all for an example."

By 1910 Babbitt had found strong fellowship in the direction his mind was working, notably the fellowship of Paul Elmer More. More had been born in St. Louis, Mis-

* For a full appreciation of Norton, the reader should see the essay on Norton in the eleventh series of the *Shelburne Essays* by P. E. More.

souri, a year earlier than Babbitt: he graduated from Washington University in 1887 and took his master's degree from Harvard in 1893, the same date as Babbitt. In the college year of 1894-1895 the two men were thrown together again, More as an instructor in Sanskrit at Harvard and Babbitt as an instructor in the French department. In the intervening year Babbitt had taught in the Romance Languages department of Williams College and there he had met a young instructor, Frank Jewett Mather, Jr., who was destined to figure importantly in the growth of American Humanism. But not for long were Babbitt and More to work together as university colleagues, for from Harvard More went to Byrn Mawr College, where he stayed two years teaching Sanskrit and classical literature. Then in 1901, after his retreat to Shelburne, New Hampshire, for meditation, he joined the staff of the *Independent* as literary editor. Mather too gave up academic work at this time and entered journalism as an editorial writer for the New York *Evening Post:* he was for various terms in the future to be its art critic as well as assistant editor of the *Nation* and American editor for the *Burlington Magazine.* More's future included the literary editorship of the New York *Evening Post* from 1903 to 1909, and the editorship of the *Nation,* then the supreme organ of American scholarship, from 1909 to 1914. In the meantime he had begun to write his well known series of literary studies, the *Shelburne Essays.*

More and Babbitt complement each other extraordinarily. If Babbitt inclines to Aristotle, More inclines to Plato. If Babbitt writes on literary trends, using particular

authors only in so far as they illustrate trends, More studies the individual genius, somewhat in the sinuous fashion of Sainte-Beuve, and then points out the trend. Babbitt, speaking roughly, is a critic of culture, More a critic of authors. Their area of agreement is very wide: they unite against Romanticism, agree substantially on Humanism, and diverge only when it comes to the kind of interest and the warmth of interest they feel in Religion. In short, More is more religious by temperament than Babbitt.

After his retirement from the *Nation* in 1914, More devoted himself to an enterprise of scholarship and criticism which well deserves an adjective to be used with care, an adjective which has several times been applied to it by men who do not write lightly, I mean the adjective, monumental; and for the wonderful completion of this enterprise he has occasionally been mentioned as a candidate for the Nobel Prize in literature. The undertaking was *The Greek Tradition* in five volumes, an impressive and inspiring account of the relation of Platonic and Hellenistic thought to early Christian thought; it is a work, incidentally, that has not yet even begun to be digested by American criticism.

There are those who believe More to be the best literary critic in the history of American literature. I think that is so: he appears to me an American counterpart to Cardinal Newman in his grasp at once of the ways of men, the subtle arguments of materialism, and reasoned belief in the spiritual life. But be that as it may, he is today the *doyen* of American critics, and as such a cause for na-

tional pride. Agree or not with their teachings, we must all feel pride that America presents to Europe as, respectively, her *doyen* of critics and as her master-spokesman for classical literary ideas two men of the resolution, deep scholarship, elevated thought, ripeness of judgment and wide sweep of purpose which characterize Paul Elmer More and Irving Babbitt.

Possibly the future of American Humanism will be dramatic. Already it has enough adherents of a polemical turn of mind, sharp controversialists like Robert Shafer and Seward Collins, to make things hot for their natural opponents, the Liberals, and the Liberals are certainly not going to relinquish their leadership of present-day American literature and thought before resorting to every device of literary dispute. Perhaps in the next decade Humanist and Liberal will pamphleteer against each other with all the zest and pungency and fierceness of the verbal warfare waged between Tories and Whigs in eighteenth century England. But up till now the New Humanists have been mainly perfecting their viewpoint, gathering strength, and preparing for action.

I distinguish three generations of New Humanists and divide, very arbitrarily, the rise of American Humanism thus far into three brief periods, the first from 1900 to 1917, when Stuart P. Sherman's *On Contemporary Literature* appeared, the second from 1917 to the publication of Babbitt's *Democracy and Leadership* in 1924, and the third from 1924 to the present.

From 1900 to 1917 the first generation of New Human-

ists was teaching and writing out of its maturity. Babbitt was publishing his views on educational reform, on modern confusion in the arts, and on literary criticism. More was brilliantly editing the *Nation* and composing volume after volume of carefully thought out and gracefully written studies of literature. Frank Jewett Mather, Jr., was making a name as an exacting but sympathetic critic of the fine arts, a calling of which in America he is now the dean. In passing, it may be noted that Mather was a pioneer in the work of advancing the books of Herman Melville to a front place in our literature. At the University of Nebraska, Prosser Hall Frye and Sherlock Bronson Gass were teaching, thinking and writing. Perhaps most prominent of all was the late W. C. Brownell, of whom more than mere mention is required.

Brownell, More and Babbitt—the names often formed a triad, and yet Brownell never held explicitly the general ideas worked out by More and Babbitt. The bond was sympathetic, but intellectually not clearly established. I once ventured to call Brownell a Victorian standpatter. Perhaps this was too harsh. Objection was taken by a critic who nevertheless declared that Brownell's "senses never felt a concrete situation freshly, unmediated by the anticipation of habit. His mind, acute in distinguishing things, rarely attained any ideas and never a general philosophy. And his feeling for life seldom drove him to remove the blinkers of convention." It will be seen that these defects lead to standpattism, however, and Brownell resisted change and stood in general for the Mid-Victorian temper and standards. His mind and

tastes were typically nineteenth century: he did not have the freedom of the centuries so arduously won by Babbitt and More. But he was loosely united to them in the low opinion he entertained of many forms of modernism and in his insistence on critical standards.

Knowledge of the work these men—Brownell, Gass, Frye, Mather, More and Babbitt—were performing in the early years of this century relieves a little the oppressive feeling of dearth we have in regarding that time in America. In *Their Day in Court,* an out-of-print book by a forgotten impressionistic critic, Percival Pollard, we may get an excellent picture of this brief period of literary dearth. Pollard fought against the dry rot of the professors, the genteelness of editors like Hamilton Wright Mabie, the commercialism of most that passed for criticism, and the overwhelming mediocrity of the period's books. Rather sadly he said in 1908: "It does not seem to me as if there were, on our side of the Atlantic, any longer such a thing as the art of letters; it is merely a trade." In that same year a gifted young poet, Ezra Pound, fled our country, and later in his poem, *L'Homme Moyen Sensuel,* expressed his disgust for the quietism of the times more violently than even Pollard did.

> Still I'd respect you if you could bury
> Mabie, and Lyman Abbott and George Woodberry,
> For minds so wholly founded upon quotations
> Are not the best of pulse for infant nations.

So it was up to about 1912. There were certain giants looming over the scene—Howells and Henry James and

Mark Twain—but they had no great animating effect upon it. James seemed too remote, Howells too selective and genteel in his realism, and Mark Twain too given to compromises. According to Pollard, the one American of literary genius then alive was almost completely neglected. He meant Ambrose Bierce.

Pollard and Pound were right. The period in spite of James, Howells and Mark Twain and, if you will, Bierce, was low in creative vitality, and the bulk of its criticism was feeble,—Huneker flashing the cheap jewelry of his style, Mabie composing his "White Lists" of books: both extremists can without a second's reluctance be dispensed with. But looking back, now that the transient criticism of 1900-1912 has been swept away, we see that there were more independent critics at work than Pollard recognized and that they were doing extremely hard thinking amidst the plague of mediocre books. They continued to elaborate their thought as American literature entered upon a new and more fertile phase between 1912 and 1915.

Some of the multiplying signs of the coming of a new order were the founding of *Poetry* magazine in Chicago, the establishment of the *New Republic,* the beginnings of the *Little Review* and *Others,* the blooming of Greenwich Village, and the generative center for fresh art impulses set up at "291," the art gallery of Alfred Stieglitz. Soon a new group of authors began winning laurels: Masters, Dreiser, Mencken, Brooks, Bourne, were on the rise. The ferment worked faster . . . little theatres . . . the *Masses* and the *Liberator* . . . Coady's *Soil* magazine . . . the *Seven Arts* . . . the *Nation* under Villard . . .

the *Dial* as a libertarian fortnightly. American participation in the war only made the new ventures bubble more furiously: they flourished, when not strangled by official censorship, on dissent. Finally, in 1919 came Waldo Frank's *Our America,* the distillation of this time of ferment from 1912.

Frank in this book took no cognisance, as his confrère Van Wyck Brooks did, of the critical activities of the first generation of the New Humanists. Nor did he pause to examine the work of Stuart P. Sherman, the forerunner of the second generation of American Humanists. But Sherman in 1917 had brought about the first spectacular duel between the New Humanists and the naturalists represented by H. L. Mencken. Sherman had been trained at Harvard under Babbitt: as a contributor to the *Nation,* he had been groomed by Paul Elmer More. In 1917 he published a book, *On Contemporary Literature,* in which he played the part of the younger spokesman for classicism.

It is the best of Sherman's books. Nine-tenths of his work is mediocre, but in *On Contemporary Literature* he surpassed himself. His insights into such authors as Synge, George Moore, Anatole France, H. G. Wells, Theodore Dreiser were sharp, deep and excruciating to those who admired them. Of George Moore, he wrote: "Purely intellectual initiative he had none: but he has been swiftly responsive to every new influence in art and literature. All his life he has lurked in the purlieus of schools and insinuated himself into movements, solicitating, like the barren Calpurnia, the fructifying touch of some fleet clear eyed runner . . . Mr. Moore does not

think: he muses." Of Anatole France, he observed: "He loves above all else the luxury of philosophic despair . . . The skepticism of M. France is largely a literary pose. It is his justification for unlimited intellectual self-indulgence." And here is an excellent working distinction between realism and naturalism in fiction: "Both are representations of the life of man in contemporary or nearly contemporary society, and both are presumably composed of materials within the experience and observation of the author. But the realistic novel is a representation based upon a theory of human conduct. If the theory of human conduct is adequate, the representation constitutes an addition to literature and to social history. A naturalistic novel is a representation based upon a theory of animal behavior. Since a theory of animal behavior can never be an adequate basis for a representation of the life of man in contemporary society, such a representation is an artistic blunder."

Little wonder such thrusts as these produced an outcry, and there is now no doubt that Sherman was vilified on the strength of this acute book. We may look forward to the sober correction of the partisan denunciations he called forth. In the meantime let us hear a Humanist version of Sherman's duel with Mencken, as an offset to the much better known story given out by the sympathizers with Mencken. I quote from Seward Collins writing in the *Bookman:*

"Until after the war the main force of his (Sherman's) work lay in the brilliant application of the point of view he had learned from Irving Babbitt and Paul E. More,

carrying into the enemy's camp their warfare against naturalism and deliquescent romanticism. With the publication of *On Contemporary Literature* at the end of 1917 he became the recognized spokesman for tradition and authority against the 'liberating' and 'innovating' efforts of the latest generation. The effectiveness of his campaign may be judged from the shrieks, hoots and curses which greeted his book in the radical magazines and in some of the newspapers, notably in Chicago, where the new men occupied most of the reviewing media. The Chicago outburst, characterized by unanimous, simultaneous and extreme virulence, makes very amusing reading in retrospect. Several records in this kind of criticism must have been hung up during the onslaught, which went on for weeks.

"Participants in the Chicago attack have explained that factors aside from the book itself entered into the reception of *On Contemporary Literature*. The cause most frequently given is the review of Mencken's *A Book of Prejudices* which Sherman published in the *Nation* of November 29, 1917—just a month before his own book appeared—under the title *Beautifying American Literature*. The review might well explain any amount of rage among Mencken's friends and disciples: it was one of the most completely devastating slatings of a book and of a man ever penned. . . .

"This encounter was really an historic occasion in American letters and thought. On the one side, for a number of years Irving Babbitt and Paul E. More had brought supreme qualities of intellect, scholarship, and

literary skill to the perennial task of restating the case for tradition in literature, morals, politics and philosophy. The result was a series of powerful books providing almost a new basis for the traditionalist cause, but one related at every point to the earlier American traditionalists, to the main stream of European culture, and to the great classical traditions of both the West and the East. In Stuart Sherman these men had found a young disciple and champion whose gifts, while not qualifying him to advance their work along all of the extremely broad front on which they were engaged, yet enabled him to make immediate and effective application of their views in their own country and among the writers of the day.

"On the other side, the disruptive, anti-authoritarian, anti-traditional tendencies, which America had for the most part resisted even when in the 'nineties they took England by storm, after their successful tour of the continent, had from the beginning of the century been gathering strength. As the century got into its teens, the new forces found a vigorous, infectious spokesman in H. L. Mencken, who had spent his youth soaking up all the prevalent forms of the heretical doctrines—Huxleyan agnosticism and science-worship, Pater's æstheticism with trimmings by Wilde, the hedonism and routine mockery of Anatole France, the inverted sentimentality of Nietzsche, Ibsen, and the other shrunken giants of fifty years ago, and so on. To all this Mencken had added a Bohemian individualism from various sources (given aristocratic airs by talk of Federalism, the civilized minorities, etc.), a smart up-to-dateness, and a talent for the violent

buffoonery of American provincial journalism. To many this rich mixture proved irresistible.

"These two antagonistic tendencies developed side by side for years without clashing: the new men were restricted to shady magazines, fleeting-tendency journals, and infrequent books which remained outside channels of discussion. But in Mencken had arrived a personality who could not be overlooked. And in Sherman the traditionalists had a representative so sensitive to the forceful figures of his day that he must have his say on them. The two men, who had been born a few months apart, had entered upon literary criticism within a few weeks of each other in 1908, and now at the end of 1917 published almost simultaneously their first significant books. The result was the episode which we have recounted. The old had met the new in open conflict, and the fight was on."

I take this episode which Collins has described so vividly to mark the end of the first period of American Humanism. This, as stated before, is quite arbitrary, but it is a temporary convenience. For in this first brush Sherman and his friends suffered defeat. Not defeat on intellectual grounds, but defeat when it came to making their ideas and standards prevail. *On Contemporary Literature* was given a black name as a puritan castigation of modern writers which even today keeps it out of the hands of young people. Sherman himself underwent a metamorphosis. He coarsened his style and vulgarized his thought and within a few years was on the side of the very Liberals he had once scorned. From the Liberal

point of view, Sherman had advanced, escaping from a rigid system of ideas, to a more genial play of his sympathies and a greater openness of mind. From the Humanist viewpoint, he disintegrated. Losing him, the New Humanists lost their one champion who at this time was willing to employ his energies cutting off the latest heads sprouted by the hydra of naturalism. The Naturalists, the Liberals, the Romanticists, were to have things their own way for the next few years.

1920 was their year of jubilation, for in this year their spirit of revolt, hitherto nourished in the intelligentsia and among the artists, suddenly became popular. It was spread abroad by the success of such realistic novels as Sinclair Lewis's *Main Street,* Floyd Dell's *Moon Calf,* and Zona Gale's *Miss Lulu Bett.* Eugene O'Neill conquered Broadway at last with *Beyond the Horizon,* and in the same season *Emperor Jones* was produced in Greenwich Village. The *Dial* became an advanced monthly of the arts, the *Freeman* launched itself on a four years' voyage of philosophic anarchism, Art Young conducted his short-lived *Good Morning,* contributing his laughter to dissolve the capitalist régime. Such books as *The American Credo* by Mencken and Nathan, *Poor White* by Sherwood Anderson, *The Brass Check* by Upton Sinclair, *The Ordeal of Mark Twain* by Van Wyck Brooks, and *The Dark Mother* by Waldo Frank made the year seem splendid with revolt, with energy, with novelty. The Red 'Twenties had dawned. In this tumult the New Humanists were lost from sight, and mouse-valiant book reviewers in droves echoed the words of J. E. Spingarn without

bothering to read the men they were condemning. "These men," said Spingarn of Babbitt and More in the Freeman Pamphlet entitled *On American Books,* "have the learning and culture of the best academic critics of France; but what avails their petulant erudition if it serves no other purpose than to whine over the irrevocable past and to sneer at the aspirations of modern men?" Spingarn was floating with the new current and it seemed to carry all the old barriers before it.

Practically every one in the new movement agreed that the objects of attack were Puritanism and industrialism. In fiction, realism and naturalism came in as the fashion. Psycho-analysis attained its greatest vogue. Lyricism, emotionalism, were valued chiefly, and intellectualism suffered a decline in esteem. The star of the new America was heralded rising out of the Middle West. An American renascence has begun, the prophets declared, and now we shall create an indigenous culture. Expansion was in the air. Who would pay heed in all this excitement to Babbitt and More who stressed the opposite mood, concentration?

They, however, continued to swim against the swirling current of Romanticism. More was at work on his magnum opus, *The Greek Tradition,* and in 1918, the year after Sherman's *On Contemporary Literature* had been blackened, Babbitt published his remarkable study of the use and misuse of the imagination, *Rousseau and Romanticism.* They were putting the last touches on their system of ideas, and had the satisfaction while so engaged of beholding a small second generation of New Humanists

begin to come forward: Stanley P. Chase at Bowdoin College, G. R. Elliott at Amherst, Robert Shafer at the University of Cincinnati, and Norman Foerster at the University of North Carolina. In 1924 appeared Babbitt's *Democracy and Leadership,* a study of modern political thought which conducted the author at its conclusion back in a great circle to his starting point in his first book, the need for collegiate reform in our study of the humanities. We may say, for convenience' sake, that *Democracy and Leadership* closed the second period of American Humanism. The New Humanism's edifice of ideas was now virtually complete.

In the next period, from 1924 to the present, the humanistic party gathered adherents and momentum as a distinct counter-movement to the still triumphant naturalistic movement. T. S. Eliot, who has made no secret of his partial indebtedness to Babbitt, was instrumental in interesting various young critics in the ideas of More and Babbitt. Two brief notes in *The Sacred Wood* had the effect, even early in the Red 'Twenties, of raising a doubt about the correctness of the current adverse judgments on Babbitt and More delivered by men like Spingarn, Mencken and Brooks. Later articles by Eliot and the opening of the pages of his review, *The Criterion,* to discussions of the New Humanism did much to make Humanism a chief topic of distinguished conversation. The *Forum* also undertook in a series of articles pro and con to advance Humanism to the forefront of the intellectual world. A third generation of New Humanists—prominent among them being Alan Reynolds Thompson and

Harry Hayden Clark—was formed: the *Hound and Horn,* an organ of *les jeunes* edited by a former student of Babbitt, for a time flirted with the ideas of the counter-movement. Finally, in 1929 under the slashing leadership of Seward Collins the *Bookman* took up arms for the cause of More and Babbitt.

Meantime, the main naturalistic movement in American letters was slackening. In increasing numbers people were growing weary of Menckenism. Two popular books in 1929 showed the hour was striking for fresh ideas: one, Krutch's *The Modern Temper,* was a confession of impotence and gloom over the loss of the romantic hopes that had been so dazzling in 1920, the other, Lippmann's *A Preface to Morals,* recognized the need for a new discipline in living and made effort towards a formulation of one. Two prominent magazines of artistic revolt suspended and each gave a curiously significant reason. The *Dial* said that "although a magazine can get along somehow without readers it cannot exist without contributors." And Margaret Anderson said in the farewell number of the *Little Review:* "As this number will show, even the artist doesn't know what he is talking about. And I can no longer go on publishing a magazine in which no one really knows what he is talking about." Verily, times were changing! We come to 1930, and hand-to-hand fighting at last between the New Humanists and the Liberals or Naturalists or Romantics, as you choose to call them.

The occasion was the publication of the symposium, *Humanism and America,* edited by Norman Foerster

with the assistance of P. H. Houston, G. R. Elliott and Robert Shafer. It provoked a new "battle of the books" but thus far no Swift has arisen to lash the gross stupidities committed by the majority of the modernists. The controversy in general was a repetition on a much wider scale of the unscrupulous Chicago onslaught on Sherman's book in 1917. Issues were obscured, prejudice appealed to, meanings distorted: literary careerists rushed in, trying to outshout each other, and the low estate of criticism in America became painfully clear. I need only cite the testimony of an observer not on the Humanist side who was finally driven to write: "I confess to impatience with the row about Humanism, because in the course of it, in the past half year or so, I have seen the powerful principles laid down by Irving Babbitt, being confused and cheapened." The words are by Gilbert Seldes. Finally, an opposition symposium, *The Critique of Humanism,* was hastily organized and hurriedly despatched to the book shops three months after *Humanism and America* saw the light on the counters. With what seem to me the cogent objections to the standpoint of Babbitt and More advanced in *The Critique of Humanism,* I shall deal by and by.

But shall we let the unsavoury episode just narrated pass without recording the full harshness of judgment it deserves? I conceive it the strict duty of a historian and lover of letters to say that the cause of Romanticism is not so poor that it needs to be defended by poor reasons and mob-appeals and that there is in fact a high standard of argument already set in this controversy by the writings

of the English critics, Hugh l'Anson Fausset and J. Middleton Murry, *against* the classicists' position. One's first desire is to see, regardless of one's party sympathies, the steady advancement, the heightening of literary excellence, of all schools—let us have everything at its highest point—and it is just this desire for *quality* of controversy that was ungratified by the outpourings of the American modernists. Really, they should have done better! I can only say that if we imagine that criticism has a deity, as love was once fabled to have, then we shall have to invent two forms of it, even as the Greeks conceived of Aphrodite Uranus and Aphrodite Pandemos. We shall have to say that there is presiding over the labors of critics Polite Criticism and Vulgar Criticism, and that it was Vulgar Criticism which ruled most of the pens attempting to deface the New Humanism in the spring of 1930. No fierce Tory with the genius of Swift arose, it is true, to wither the present-day worshippers of Vulgar Criticism, but we can turn back to Swift himself for the necessary scathing words.

"Meanwhile, Momus, fearing the worst, and calling to mind an ancient prophecy, which bore no very good face to his children the Moderns bent his flight to the region of a malignant deity, called criticism. She dwelt on the top of a snowy mountain in Nova Zembla; there Momus found her extended in her den, upon the spoils of numberless volumes, half devoured. At her right hand sat Ignorance, her father and husband, blind with age; at her left, Pride, her mother, dressing her up in the scraps of paper herself had torn. There was Opinion, her sister,

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light of foot, hoodwinked, and headstrong, yet giddy, and perpetually turning. About her played her children, Noise and Impudence, Dulness and Vanity, Positiveness, Pedantry, and Ill-manners. The goddess herself had claws like a cat; her head, and ears, and voice, resembled those of an ass; her teeth fallen out before, her eyes turned inward, as if she looked only upon herself; her diet was the overflowing of her own gall; her spleen was so large, as to stand prominent, like a dug of the first rate; nor wanted excrescencies in form of teats, at which a crew of ugly monsters were greedily sucking; and, what is wonderful to conceive, the bulk of spleen increased faster than the sucking could diminish it. 'Goddess,' said Momus, 'can you sit idly here while our devout worshippers, the Moderns, are this minute entering into a cruel battle, and perhaps now lying under the swords of their enemies? Who, then, hereafter will ever sacrifice, or build altars, to our divinities?' "

Unlike the quarrels that were the occasion for Swift's writing *The Battle of the Books,* the new "battle of the books" caused by the advent of American Humanism involves issues that far transcend the ordinary interests of scholars and professional literary men. So far as the present controversy is literary, it is pretty much the case of the warm dispute in Æsop's Fable between the Bee and the Spider as to which was the better artist. This fable Swift rewrote in *The Battle of the Books* and then made Æsop draw out its application in words that cover almost equally well the respective arguments of the Modernists

and the New Humanist today, for it will be seen that the modernistic spider makes a cult of originality and tends toward science-worship while the humanistic bee objects to the kind and impermanency of the modernist's materials and extols wide ranging and "sweetness and light."

"The disputants," Swift has Æsop say, "have admirably managed the dispute between them, have taken in the full strength of all that is to be said on both sides, and exhausted the substance of every argument *pro* and *con*. It is but to adjust the reasonings of both to the present quarrel, then to compare and apply the labors and fruits of each, as the bee has learnedly deduced them, and we shall find the conclusion fall plain and close upon the Moderns and us. For, pray, gentlemen, was ever anything so modern as the spider in his air, his turns, and his paradoxes? He argues in behalf of you his brethren and himself, with many boastings of his native stock and great genius; that he spins and spits wholly from himself, and scorns to own any obligation or assistance from without. Then he displays to you his great skill in architecture, and improvement in the mathematics. To all this the bee, as an advocate, retained by us the Ancients, thinks fit to answer—that, if one may judge of the great genius or inventions of the Moderns by what they have produced, you will hardly have countenance to bear you out, in boasting of either. Erect your schemes with as much method and skill as you please; yet if the materials be nothing but dirt, spun out of your own entrails (the guts of modern brains) the edifice will conclude at last in a cobweb, the duration of which, like that of other spiders' webs, may

be imputed to their being forgotten, or neglected, or hid in a corner. For anything else of genuine that the Moderns may pretend to, I cannot recollect; unless it be a large vein of wrangling and satire, much of a nature and substance with the spider's poison; which, however they pretend to spit wholly out of themselves, is improved by the same arts, by feeding upon the insects and vermin of the age. As for us the Ancients, we are content, with the bee, to pretend to nothing of our own beyond our wings and our voice, that is to say, our flights and our language. For the rest, whatever we have got, has been by infinite labor and search, and ranging through every corner of nature; the difference is, that, instead of dirt and poison, we have rather chosen to fill our hives with honey and wax, thus furnishing mankind with the two noblest of things, which are sweetness and light."

More quickly than anything else, and that is why I have invoked it, the potent breath of Swift ought to lift the battle-smoke that now obscures the literary quarrel between the New Humanist and the ultra-modernist and permit us to see the essentials of the doctrine of More and Babbitt. What are they? What importance and meaning and utility have they for the lay reader not afraid to look *everywhere* for guidance in facing the alternatives that life is so ingenious in forcing constantly upon man? I propose now to consider the very center of humanist teaching, the duality of human consciousness so uncompromisingly affirmed by the two leaders.

V

THE CLASSICAL REVIVAL ABROAD

> *"People have fallen into a foolish habit of speaking of orthodoxy as something heavy, humdrum, and safe. There never was anything so perilous or so exciting as orthodoxy. It was sanity: and to be sane is more dramatic than to be mad. It was the equilibrium of a man behind madly rushing horses, seeming to stoop this way and to sway that, yet in every attitude having the grace of statuary and the accuracy of arithmetic. . . . It is easy to be a madman: it is easy to be a heretic. It is always easy to let the age have its head; the difficult thing is to keep one's own. It is always easy to be a modernist; as it is easy to be a snob."*—G. K. Chesterton in *Orthodoxy.*

However, before fulfilling the promise made at the close of the preceding chapter, it seems well to take a cursory view of the classical revival in England and France. Recent experience has shown that American critics with only two or three exceptions cannot be trusted to situate a comprehensive movement like the New Humanism in its proper climate of sentiment, opinion and idea. On the contrary, many of them regarded or affected to regard the New Humanist group as a quaint local phenomenon sprung up miraculously without atmosphere and totally unrelated to similar groups anywhere else. This delusion embraced by the majority of the opponents of American Humanism badly distorted their sense of perspective: to

the broad challenge of the followers of More and Babbitt they replied with singularly inappropriate defiances. The plain truth is that a stiff parochial frame of mind simply cannot make much sense of the application of Babbitt's criticism to current American literature and life. The obvious remedy is wider travel in the countries of the mind.

More and Babbitt are spokesmen for classicism on the ground that it contains a wisdom superior to modernism. They uphold the longer traditions of the human race against the newly formed traditions of the last fifty, seventy-five or one hundred years. They believe in a profound vital conservatism, not in the contemporaneous versions of radicalism. They are, when one reviews European history in a large way, orthodox, not heterodox. In England and France we shall find distinguished writers who like Babbitt and More are classicists, traditionalists, conservative, orthodox, men who oppose with all their might and intellect the drift of modern civilization and seek to renew our sense of time-tested standards. In this chapter I intend merely to point out some of these men, to quote from each of those designated only a few characteristic words on the modern crisis: that will be enough to show on the one hand the many sides and the diversity that living classicists everywhere manifest, and on the other hand their unanimity on the errors of modernity and the need for standards and discipline will be enough to destroy the silly notion that the classical party in America is engaged in a unique reaction. I cannot here attempt rounded estimates, however brief, of the individuals mentioned, but

I shall try to transfer to the intellectual situation in America, which is our center of interest, several useful hints they offer. We must expect to find conservative force in England to be *sui generis,* and likewise in France, but for that and many other reasons an acquaintance with them, even though but a bowing one, makes for that suppleness of mind necessary to comprehend the home movement. We may even rid ourselves of senseless fears of certain words: the reader whose object is the freeing of his mind must soon overcome any horror he feels for the word, "revolutionary," or for the word, "reactionary." The free mind goes everywhere and tries to judge without prejudice the thing itself and not the name.

One thing we shall be immediately struck by is that it is purely an accident that in America the conservative attitude should temporarily be expressing itself almost entirely in the form of ideas and criticism, for this is, of course, by no means an inevitable outlet for the conservative temper. Tories, as witness Swift, can be great artists: art was never the monopoly of the Whigs, but has always been common to men of all hues of conviction. American Humanism therefore does not inculcate an uncreative attitude. It cannot, it is true, make creative ability in the arts where such ability does not exist, but neither, for that matter, can such a theory as self-expression produce creative ability. The Humanist attitude is a check on bad art: self-expression, unfortunately, is a release of bad art. On this score, which is to be preferred? No; it is a mere happenstance that at present Humanism's representatives are of a critical turn, men of ideas rather

than men of pronounced sensibility. Hence, their relative unpopularity. They advocate ideas, and ideas—it is a truism—always must fight against more inertia than emotions. An initial prejudice exists against ideas as such, whereas some one's strong feelings directly affect us either to sympathy or to resistance: emotions convey themselves almost as swiftly as actions do, but ideas, being quite the weakest element in psychology, have a much harder time travelling from person to person. Nor does one need to enlarge on the enmity felt toward criticism itself, the disparagement constantly cast on this necessary function of literary life, a habit of dispraise which, it should be noted, grew up in the romantic period. The New Humanists are mostly critics, and because of that many people conclude that their doctrine, their conservatism, is sterile in the practice of the arts. It does not follow, for it is the person who is or is not an artist, not the doctrine which is responsible. Look abroad and you will see how fertile in the arts of fiction and verse a classical reaction may be, and no doubt yet will be in our own country.

Here is a gallery of brief portraits of anti-romantic writers in England.

Philip S. Richards:—

One of the youngest English critics and probably the closest in spirit and theory to American Humanism. In the pages of the famous review, *The Nineteenth Century and After,* he has expounded very faithfully to the English reader the ideas of Babbitt and More. No one has better described the precise effect of Babbitt's main principle on those who come to accept it. "Only by following it up in

all its ramifications, as Babbitt works it out in his books with a wealth of illustrative evidence, is it possible to realize its amazing fruitfulness, and its universal applicability to the intellectual and moral problems which we have inherited from the nineteenth century. *When once its import is fairly grasped, its influence is like that of a new principle of classification in one of the descriptive sciences. New and natural lines of cleavage or affiliation at once appear, introducing order and interdependence into a mass of chaotic or misrelated facts.* A simple criterion is put into the reader's hands, which he cannot help using, even though it mean the abandonment of secret loyalties and the dethronement of long-cherished ideals. . . . We may regard him (Babbitt) as a pathologist who traces the romantic malady from its origin in Rousseau, through its mild and chronic stage in Wordsworth, to its acute and delirious phases in Tolstoy or the expressionist drama." (The italics are mine.)

T. S. Eliot:—

The prestige of this erstwhile American citizen among the younger generation has caused the same generation to be particularly attentive to his views on American Humanism. Eliot's poems, so exquisite in workmanship, subtle in perception, almost Dantean in the clarity and power of the individual image, contain the poignant suffering of a sensibility tortured by the ugliness, crassness and lowness of modern civilization. His earlier criticism dealt accurately with the effects of literary masterpieces upon his sensibility. In recent years he has broadened his basis as a critic and introduced a religious note

into his poetry. His general point of view he now describes "as classicist in literature, royalist in politics, and anglo-catholic in religion," and wisely adds, "I am quite aware that the first term is completely vague, and easily lends itself to clap-trap; I am aware that the second term is at present without definition, and easily lends itself to what is almost worse than clap-trap, I mean temperate conservatism; the third term does not rest with me to define."

Eliot holds that we should come "to the conclusion that the humanistic point of view is auxiliary to and dependent upon the religious point of view. For us, religion is of course Christianity; and Christianity implies, I think, the conception of the Church. It would be not only interesting but invaluable if Professor Babbitt, with his learning, his great ability, his influence, and his interest in the most important questions of the time, could reach this point." But on the other hand Eliot has written an essay "to call attention to the danger of the other extreme: the danger, a very real one, of *religion without humanism.*"

Herbert Read:—

A close co-worker with T. S. Eliot in the field of literary criticism, this author is severe in his condemnation of the flatness of modern life. "For Froissart," Read declares, "glory was the measure of all things, the crown of all virtues. For us it has become something remote and elusive; even something romantic and literary. We have lost the sense of glory because we have lost the habit of faith. We neither love deeply enough, nor feel deeply

enough, nor think deeply enough, to enjoy life's most impressive sanction." Read follows the path of T. E. Hulme, whose *Speculations* he edited, back to pre-Renascence philosophy: he has disciplined himself on the pages of the *Summa Theologica* and has caught fire from the complex splendor of the Middle Ages.

A champion of orthodoxy, he is critical of any particular form of orthodoxy, such as American Humanism, as his essay in the *Criterion* on *Humanism and the Absolute* reveals. This paper discussing the views of Norman Foerster and Julien Benda was sub-titled *The Texts of a Debate,* and I hope it is not lost ink to refer again to the higher standard of controversy observed in England by writers who deal with the New Humanists and to regret that our critics of Foerster's *American Criticism* were, as a rule, unable to reach up to the mark set by Read. In the essay mentioned, Read maintains that unlike Julien Benda, "Mr. Foerster, on behalf of the New Humanists, nowhere makes it clear that he accepts this absolute severance of things divine and things human. He admits that 'the ethical will' is 'a power above the ordinary self, an impersonal reality in which all men may share despite the diversity of personal temperament, and toward which their attitude must be one of subjection.' But he also says that 'the value of supernatural intuition must be tested by the intellect,' and rejects any formal theology on these grounds. But the greatest of all formal theologies, that of St. Thomas Aquinas, was precisely such a 'testing' of supernatural intuition by the intellect or reason. If religious intuitions must be submitted to ra-

tional inspection, then surely the result is a theology. Mr. Foerster cannot have it both ways: to *hesitate* 'to pass beyond' experimental knowledge to dogmatic affirmation is merely to sit on the fence: once admit the mediation of reason and you are involved in the necessity of dogma."

This point, the reader will recognize, is connected with Hulme's argument for radical discontinuities in the universe, which was injected into our first chapter and to which I pledged myself to return.

Wyndham Lewis:—

He has dramatized himself as an Ishmaelite in Occidental culture, the sworn and ferocious enemy of "Time-cults" and "Time-philosophies," of which Bergsonism is a typical specimen. Before the Great War, he was a radical painter and associated with Ezra Pound to propagate an artistic cult baptized Vorticism. Since the War he has turned social philosopher, and possibly may be a first rate Tory mind in the making. I say in the making, for up to the present Lewis is still a chaotic personality, given to extravagances, and not yet sufficiently trained in metaphysics to cope with A. N. Whitehead, S. Alexander, and some of his other *bêtes noires*. But the New Humanist can second him in many of his theses. He and Lewis are at one in their scorn for the contemporary cult of the child and the primitive and in their hostility to the modern feminization of man.

In his book, *The Art of Being Ruled,* Lewis maintains—I cannot better Montgomery Belgion's succinct re-statement in the *Bookman*—that "what happens in a 'liberal democracy' is that rule by the few is not banished, but

concealed. And it is this concealment which is, Mr. Lewis holds, responsible for so many of our contemporary ills, the greatest of these being, perhaps, mass suggestion. In a democracy the actual rulers are not the best rulers, but those who are most cunning in obtaining power, and, furthermore, since their rule has to be secret, it becomes necessary for these rulers to hypnotize the ruled into acquiescence, to discredit the old standards of existence through the agency of Science, and to organize the populace, to mechanize it, to pump it full of a destructive fatalism while it is kept imagining itself its own master." Therefore let us have again an authority that is an open authority. On Lewis's analysis of pseudo-liberty the New Humanist will agree even more heartily. "The present decay of Europe," I quote from Belgion again, "Mr. Lewis ascribes directly to the notion of freedom. Since people cannot be free and in any case do not want to be free, but only to be irresponsible, the notion of freedom has been thought to be the notion of irresponsibility, and, thus misunderstood, has been steadily weakening Europe. To this wasteful and disorganizing notion of irresponsibility he opposes the notion of 'working together' under a central control, which, he points out, gives the comfort and strength of solidarity."

Hilaire Belloc:—

As a Catholic, this versatile man—politician, poet, story-teller, essayist, historian, biographer—can naturally not regard American Humanism as more than a half-way house. This would be in general the Catholic position: however, both the New Humanist and the Catholic intel-

lectual are anti-naturalistic and pro-classical and this sets vibrating a certain bond of sympathy for each other's efforts to infuse into modern literature something of what Belloc calls "the poise, the fulness, the solemnity, the disdain of sharp effect, the glory in control, the magic of proportion" which marked the productions of the great classical periods.

"The classical spirit," observes Belloc, "has not fallen into disrepute among us: it has been forgotten. It has become alien and strange, so that men coming across it today, in our society, are like rustics coming across some marble of the ancients. It does not repel them, but it hardly attracts them at all—they can make nothing of it. . . . It is said that men who drink spirits lose their taste for wine and certainly men who use violent sauces lose their taste in cooking. Under the effect of the romantic extravagance, the general sense of the classic died. But the last extravagances of that extravagance were left for our time to suffer."

I pass now from Belloc, anti-communist, anti-capitalist, and anti-puritan, to the brilliant debater he has so greatly influenced and to whom I shall give more space than has been devoted to the other members of this little gallery of English champions of high tradition.

Gilbert K. Chesterton:—

First, I will show at once his views on the New Humanism because they pour light on the subject matter of this book, the dilemmas of liberated people today. Granted, says Chesterton: "we need a rally of the really *human* things; will which is morals, memory which is

tradition, culture which is the mental thrift of our fathers." But for him "the question really is whether Humanism can perform the functions of religion." His reply is unequivocal. "I do not believe that Humanism can be a complete substitute for Superhumanism." Why? Well, "the fact is this: that the modern world, with its modern movements, is living on its Catholic capital. It is using, and using up, the truths that remain to it out of the old treasury of Christendom." The New Humanism in Chesterton's judgment draws on Catholic capital, but it "has one very wise and worthy character. It is trying to pick up the pieces; that is, to pick up all the pieces." Only "can it stick them together? Where is the *cement* which made religion corporate and popular, which can prevent it falling to pieces in a débris of individualistic tastes and degrees?" Chesterton makes clear his doubt that the New Humanists "have the secret of continuity; certainly not of corporate continuity."

Next, I should like the reader to join me in regretting that we in America have had no G. K. Chesterton to work as an antidote to such a popular "philosopher" as H. L. Mencken. Admit all the faults of Chesterton, the occasional specious arguments, now and then the patch of tawdry rhetoric, the lapses in taste and the falls into mechanicality of style: call him, if you desire, no more than a super-journalist. These flaws, however, are no great handicap in coping with a popular propounder of belated nineteenth century rationalism of the type of Mencken, when one is as playful, as pyrotechnical, as hearty as Chesterton. By his buffooning Mencken hopes

to attract the populace to the banners of heresy: by his humor and the dazzlement of paradoxes Chesterton aims to draw the public to orthodoxy. Thus, the two men by their methods neutralize each other and leave the reader free to examine coolly what it is that in all seriousness they maintain. And in that respect Chesterton is immeasurably the larger man.

Thirdly, the history of Chesterton presents a couple of features of special interest for the person who is reacting against the contemporary welter of half-truths. How came Chesterton to his present strength of conviction on so many topics toward which his foes preserve an attitude of squeamish indecision? The startling answer is, because his early education, like that of Cardinal Newman and of Coleridge, consisted of fairy tales. Startling to us, that is, for many of us have been led to conclude that there should be no place for fairy tales in the training of the young, that the less of "fantasy" and the more of "fact" we incorporate into education, the better developed will be the sense of reality of our children. But this is one of the crimes against children, the most abominable class of crimes. No one has more forcibly stated the case for fairy tales than Coleridge. "Should children be permitted to read romances and relations of giants and magicians and genii? I know all that has been said against it; but I have formed my faith in the affirmative. I know no other way of giving the mind a love of the Great and the Whole. Those who have been led to the same truths step by step, through the constant testimony of their senses, seem to me to want a sense which I pos-

sess. They contemplate nothing but *parts,* and all *parts* are necessarily little. And the universe to them is but a mass of *little things.*". Chesterton argues somewhat differently, but it is apparent that he was stimulated by fairy tales to love the inclusive, to desire to reach the center, to devote himself to the transcendent conception. It is in the centrality and breadth of his mind that he exceeds Mencken and the smaller fry of rationalists.

Another thing to take into account is Chesterton's reaction to the Yellow Nineties in England. In his youth he was immersed in Huxleyan agnosticism and Wildean æstheticism, and he revolted vigorously from these excesses. He found young men proud of their boredom; ennui was taken to be a symptom of personal distinction. And he was informed that art was divorced from morals. He replied curtly that "there is no such thing on earth as an uninteresting subject; the only thing that can exist is an uninterested person. . . . The bored has certainly proved himself prosaic"—which places the blame where it should go. And to the *l'art pour l'art* people, he said: "A small artist is content with art; a great artist with nothing except everything."

Fourthly, Chesterton delighted himself as every one knows with the pleasures of a modern heresy-hunt. The hunting ground was certainly happy, for, as he pointed out, we are living in the decadence of the great revolutionary period, and nowadays "we are more and more to discuss details in art, politics, literature," but "general theories are everywhere contemned . . . we will have no generalizations." "When the old Liberals removed the

gags from all the heresies," Chesterton goes on to say, "their idea was that religious and philosophical discoveries might thus be made. Their view was that cosmic truth was so important that every one ought to bear independent testimony. The modern idea is that cosmic truth is so unimportant that it cannot matter what any one says."

Vague relativism was the enemy and Chesterton went slashing after it in the essays on Shaw, George Moore, Wells, G. Lowes Dickinson, Joseph McCabe, Whistler and other moderns included in *Heretics*. Of them all it seems to me that Wells best typifies what Chesterton stands against, Wells in whom is fused sentimental naturalism and scientific naturalism, Wells the prophet of humanitarianism. Chesterton put his finger unhesitatingly on the soft spot in Wells's whole program when he noticed that "in his new Utopia he says, for instance, that a chief point of the Utopia will be a disbelief in original sin. If he had begun with the human soul—that is, if he had begun on himself—he would have found original sin almost the first thing to be believed in. He would have found, to put the matter shortly, that a permanent possibility of selfishness arises from the mere fact of having a self, and not from any accidents of education or ill-treatment. And the weakness of all Utopias is this, that they take the greatest difficulty of man and assume it to be overcome, and then give an elaborate account of the overcoming of the smaller ones."

Finally, I wish the reader to note that the "paradoxes of Christianity" which Chesterton defends with so much

gusto in *Orthodoxy* were not imposed on him, were not slavishly accepted by him because of their attributed authority, but were personally rediscovered. It is often thought, sometimes with cause, many times unjustifiably, that the exponent of tradition is simply a timid and unoriginal man: he flees, so it is said, to tradition for safety; he does not return to it because his experience has taught him that a given tradition is right. But do all men adopt traditional teachings out of fear? Chesterton sets us right. Classicism is properly a life, and not a mere subscribing to inherited doctrines, and Chesterton has described the spirit and result of that life when he said: "I am the man who with the utmost daring discovered what had been discovered before. . . . When I fancied that I stood alone I was really in the ridiculous position of being backed up by all Christendom. It may be, Heaven forgive me, that I did try to be original, but I only succeeded in inventing all by myself an inferior copy of the existing traditions of civilized religion. . . . I did try to found a heresy of my own; and when I had put the last touches to it, I discovered that it was orthodoxy."

The vivacity of commonsense! That, in a phrase, describes the appeal of Chesterton, and nothing, it seems to me, is more often lacking from American literary journalism than commonsense in the first place and in the second place commonsense sparkling at its vivacious best.

To many American critics any stick is good enough to beat Humanism with. But it has happened several times in our literary history that the French have been more

quickly appreciative than we of a genuine new power appearing amongst our writers: it seems almost to be a law that an unpopular spiritual force in America should first receive its full due in France. It is a Frenchman, Louis J. A. Mercier, who has written the first book treating the New Humanism as a movement. *Le Mouvement humaniste aux Etats-Unis,* which makes a study of Babbitt, More and the late W. C. Brownell, was crowned when it appeared in 1928 by the French Academy, and it drew forth sympathetic comment from the spokesmen for a variety of groups, from the Catholic papers to the Action Française, from the Abbé Bremond to Baron Seillière. We can easily understand the warmth of this reception by French critics. "Here were American authors," says Mercier, "who spoke their own language, who were fully alive to all the traditions, who faced squarely the problem of man, in the light of all these traditions, and who brought a formula for a twentieth-century approach to a common reëxamination of all the data involved."

Why have we not more examples in translation of the work of the French classical reactionaries? We have a few—Benda's *Belphégor* and *The Treason of the Intellectuals,* Maritain's *Three Reformers* and *Art and Scholasticism,* Leon Daudet's *The Stupid Nineteenth Century,* Henri Massis's *The Defence of the West*—but these are barely suggestive of the resources remaining to be exploited by our publishers. We have—to name names—no translations of such important works as Pierre Lasserre's *Le Romantisme français* and *Cinquante Ans de*

Pensée française by which we may trace the evolution of this former pupil of Charles Maurras, nor have we a translation of Ernest Seillière's *Le Mal romantique* or of his studies of Rousseau or of his *Philosophie de l'Impérialisme,* all efforts to "de-Rousseauize" France by large European perspectives. Above all, we have no books in English from the energetic pen of Charles Maurras. This is odd, since no less discerning a critic than T. S. Eliot classes Maurras as a philosopher of rank equal to Irving Babbitt and declares that he "has written as fine prose as any French author living." Moreover, he says, referring to England, "if anything, in another generation or so, is to preserve us from a sentimental Anglo-Fascism, it will be some system of ideas which will have gained much from the study of Maurras."

But perhaps before speaking of Maurras further I should give a very general classification of the French affirmers of the classic order in life and literature. We can divide them into three groupings: (1) those associated with the Action Française and committed to its program of "integral nationalism" which involves a return to royalism; (2) the Neo-Thomists, such as Henri Massis with his bogey of Orientalism and Jacques Maritain, "the most conspicuous figure and probably the most powerful force in contemporary French philosophy," according to T. S. Eliot; (3) certain critics independent of organized groups like Julien Benda whose recent book, *The Treason of the Intellectuals,* attacks with great force the fomenting of political passions indulged in by some

of the French classicists, notably those of the Action Française.

Charles Maurras is the outstanding man in the Action Française. He began as an enthusiast for Auguste Comte and Positivism. In 1890 he joined Jean Moreas in the founding of the Ecole Romane, a literary return from Symbolism to antiquity. He wrote fiction and verse expressive of his admiration for Hellenism. But his life's work has been in political and social thought and in literary criticism. For years "Politics first" has been his cry: he establishes his teaching on the doctrine of Joseph de Maistre who preached a turning back to monarchism after the French Revolution. The sifting of Maurras's career, however, is a rather complicated business. To many he is an atheist, certainly an agnostic; yet for some years he and his organization, the Action Française, were Catholic, only to be condemned in the end by the Pope. T. S. Eliot's explanation is that Maurras is "an unbeliever who cannot believe, and who is too honest to pretend to himself or to others that he does believe; if others can believe, so much the better not only for them but for the world at large. The peculiarity of Maurras's agnosticism (or atheism if you like) is that he recognizes that he has much more in common, in the temporal sphere, with Catholics than with Protestants or atheists."

Today Maurras directs—with the partnership of the truculent Leon Daudet—the newspaper, *Action Française,* which flies on its mast the following inscription: *"Chef de la Maison de France, j'en revendique tous les droits, j'en assume toutes les responsabilités, j'en accepte tous les*

devoirs" over the name of "*Le duc de Guise, héritier des quarante Rois qui en mille ans firent la France.*" With Maurras's bellicosities, his fanning of national and racial hatreds, I am not now concerned, nor should I like in any case to defend them. It is more germane to this book to quote from him on tradition. "Not all traditions," he says, "are equal. . . . Amongst all others one tradition offers itself, of which the conspicuous character is its almost complete conformity with those principles of taste which express humanity raised to its highest point. We see it come to birth in Ionia as from the ashes of Homer; it continues under the olive trees of Cephisus. Roman sages who adopt it make a new home for it. The middle ages do not banish it completely either from France or from the towns of Italy. It reforms itself and occupies the whole of Europe; but it is Paris now, as Athens once, that preserves it. From the middle of the sixteenth century to the end of the seventeenth, humanism and the classical spirit, refined to an Attic point of taste, never lacked representatives among us, or an élite worthy of understanding and loving it." This Græco-Latin classical tradition, which belongs to France, Maurras goes on to say, "surpasses all others. It reveals, in fact, a force of life equal in flame, in coloring, in simple brutality or refined delicacy to whatever the rest of the world can show, from the steppes of Russia to the shores of Guinea; and as no other popular tradition can vie with it in sensibility, it defies forever all its rivals, in the order and luminosity of its writings, in the great generality of their style. The works of this tradition are

rightly called Humane Letters, in that they interest the whole world." Finally, he exclaims: "But the pursuit of the classical tradition includes other things than gods and goddesses. It authorizes a scrupulous and passionate criticism. Far from freezing the senses, it excites, begets creation. Even among ourselves, above all among ourselves, there is much to be done. We can dream of tragedies nearer to nature, more direct and simple than those of Racine. The heroic vein of Corneille leaves room for a poet who should be wiser than he. The reader will be surprised if I add that what we lack especially is lyric poetry! Consider how little can be preserved from the romantic lumber-room. We must bring things back to Malherbe. There was once a literary criticism, there can be again, yet finer, and lead our literature to its renascence."

Turning to the Neo-Thomists, it seems to me that Jacques Maritain is the dominant figure. He began as a student of Bergson but shortly afterwards joined the Catholic Church and today holds the position of professor of modern history and philosophy at the Institut Catholique of Paris. He grounds himself entirely on the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas and his whole effort is to translate it into terms of modern life, to make it serviceable and illuminating to the man of the twentieth century. For a few years Maritain associated himself with the Action Française but withdrew when in 1927 the Pope proscribed the journal of Maurras, Daudet and Pujo.

Maritain writes with an austere clarity. A fiery faith burns in the depths of his thought and makes his most

abstract pages strangely intense. He is an utterly ruthless opponent of what he conceives to be modern errors, and, like the American Humanists, he considers Romanticism as the source of many of these illusions. "The word romanticism," he notes and I recommend his definition to the reader, "may give rise to many confusions. I am aware that there have been all kinds of things, even very good things, in the complex movement classed under this name. But nothing is so idle as to argue about words and recast their definition to suit your subject; and in spite of everything usage has adequately settled the meaning of this one. In so far as it signifies a religious eviction of reason and its works, the sacred unbridling of sensation, the holy parade of self and the adoration of primitive natural instinct, pantheism as theology, and emotional stimulus as the rule of life, it must be confessed that Rousseau, by his mystical naturalism, is at the direct source of such a spiritual evil."

Again, like the New Humanists, Maritain attacks the ubiquitous sway of modern science on the ground that science, unconfined to its proper rôle, dehumanizes man. In his essay on Descartes, who to Maritain founded the principle of the deep inhumanity of modern science, we may read: "In the higher order of Cognition the Cartesian reformation gave the irretrievable stability of the things of the spirit to the moral attitude of turning towards perishable goods. See what the great name of Science has become. It is today hardly applied to anything but the knowledge of matter, and science, *par excellence,* is regarded by most modern thinkers as belonging to a mu-

seum. In the modern world, reason turns its back on eternal things and is ordered to the creature. It rates the mathematics of phenomena above wisdom. From the mountain of its excellence it has descried all the kingdoms of the material universe and the glory of them, and it goes down to possess them."

And now we come to the freelances of the classical revival, to proud polemicists like Julien Benda who never tire in the exposure of romantic follies. Benda, novelist and essayist, tenacious opponent of Bergson, has invented a name for the disease of pan-lyricism which rages in America as well as in France. He calls it "belphégorism," for it is in his argument the worship of a false god, Belphégor or Baal-Peor as it is written in the Bible. Belphégorism briefly is the requirement of modern society that works of art should be *exclusively* productive of emotions and sensations, that history should be written as a series of heart-throbs, that philosophy and science should give thrills. Belphégorism is the love of the indistinct, of the novelty purely for its own sake, of subjectivity carried as far as possible. Conversely, belphégorism hates the mind, hates discipline, hates form. Benda makes it clear that he is no objector to the lyrical in itself, but rather to the invasion by lyricism of all provinces of the intellectual life. To the softness in taste of modern French society he opposes the plastic sensibility of the great seventeenth century, the period of Descartes and Pascal, of Corneille, Molière and Racine, of Bossuet, of La Fontaine, of Madame de La Fayette.

By a plastic sensibility Benda means a sensibility, whose principal modes are sight and touch, which organizes itself about the idea of form. It loves precision and firmness. This sensibility is localized, perhaps because it involves the more highly specialized and developed nerves. It is, Benda declares, a centralized and correlated sensibility, the source of poise. In contrast he places the musical sensibility whose principal modes are hearing, taste and smell. This is a disquieting sensibility, for it consists in sensation without contour, it overflows the whole being with scattered and diffused sensation. The consciousness is decentralized. The result is the opposite of poise, being intoxication and vertigo. Modern society tends toward a musical sensibility, a tendency Benda has become seasoned in combating.

This distinction between two types of sensibility is very usable, and I shall come back to it when we take up Nietzsche's great interpretation of the Apollo-Dionysus conflict in the final chapter. But now this exhibit of the friends of order abroad must be closed by a longish quotation from Benda's *The Treason of the Intellectuals* illustrating the difference between two types of humanitarianism (or more properly between Humanism and humanitarianism), a difference our New Humanists constantly insist upon. In addition Benda brings out very well a point usually overlooked by people who, perceiving the aristocratic leanings of the New Humanists, accuse them of being too disdainful of their fellow men.

"In our age the descendants of Erasmus, Montaigne,

Voltaire, have denounced humanitarianism * as a moral degeneration, nay, as an intellectual degeneration, in that it implies 'a total absence of practical common sense'; for practical common sense has become the measure of intellectual values with these strange 'clerks.'

"I should like to draw a distinction between humanitarianism as I mean it here—a sensitiveness to the abstract quality of what is human, to Montaigne's 'whole form of human condition'—and the feeling which is usually called humanitarianism, by which is meant the love for human beings existing in the concrete. The former impulse (which would more accurately be called humanism) is the attachment to a concept. It is a pure passion of the intelligence, implying no terrestrial love. It is quite easy to conceive of a person plunging into the concept of what is human without having the least desire even to see a man. This is the form assumed by love of humanity in the great patricians of the mind like Erasmus, Malebranche, Spinoza, Goethe, who all were men, it appears, not very anxious to throw themselves into the arms of their neighbors. The second humanitarianism is a state of the heart and therefore the portion of plebeian souls. It occurs among moralists when lofty intellectual discipline disappears among them and gives way to sentimental exaltation, I mean in the eighteenth century (chiefly with Diderot) and above all in the nineteenth century, with Michelet, Quinet, Proudhon, Romain Rolland, Georges Duhamel. This sentimental form of humani-

* In view of what Benda goes on to say, read Humanism here for humanitarianism.

tarianism and forgetfulness of its conceptual form explain the unpopularity of this doctrine with so many distinguished minds, who disavow two equally repulsive commonplaces in the arsenal of political ideology. One of them is the 'patriotic bore' and the other 'the universal embrace.'

"The humanitarianism * which holds in honor the abstract quality of what is human, is the only one which allows us to love *all* men. Obviously, as soon as we look at men in the concrete, we inevitably find that this quality is distributed in different quantities, and we have to say with Renan: 'In reality one is *more or less* a man, *more or less* the son of God . . . I see no reason why a Papuan should be immortal.' Modern equalitarians, by failing to understand that there can be no equality except in the abstract and that inequality is the essence of the concrete, have merely displayed the extraordinary vulgarity of their minds as well as their amazing political clumsiness.

"Humanism, as I have defined it, has nothing to do with internationalism. Internationalism is a protest against national egotism, not on behalf of a spiritual passion, but on behalf of another egotism, another earthly passion. It is the impulse of a certain category of men—laborers, bankers, industrialists—who unite across frontiers in the name of private and practical interests, and who only oppose the national spirit because it thwarts them in satisfying those interests.

"In comparison with such impulses, national passion

* That is, Humanism.

appears an idealistic and disinterested impulse. In short, humanism is also something entirely different from cosmopolitanism, which is the simple desire to enjoy the advantages of all nations and all their cultures, and is generally exempt from moral dogmatism."

Such, briefly indicated, is the general field of contemporary thought in which American Humanism fits. I deem it, however, premature and over-enthusiastic to perceive in this field the beginnings of a new renascence, and likewise I do not think the parallel between the living asserters of classical ideals and the Humanists of the Renascence should be stressed. True enough, the modern revivalists have entered into a gigantic battle to overthrow the preëminence of the dogma of Naturalism, just as the Renascence men assaulted the preëminence of petrified theological dogma, and true enough the moderns catch their vision, as did their brothers in the fifteenth century, from the ancient literatures. But it is yet to be seen whether they can do more than *defend* the ancestral treasures, whether they can be more than a corrective force to the excesses and barbarisms of our era. Have they the potency to initiate a real transformation of modern society? Can they even arrest its downward plunge, let alone reverse its direction? Have they the hidden strength to work a miracle? The questions discourage all desires to prophesy. The only thing that can be said is that the traditionalist thinkers are making a supremely important contribution to the thought of today, that by their contribution they tend to improve the gen-

eral intellectual situation, and the first step is the production of a more favorable situation, in itself a huge task, for diamond ideas about the "good life." Meanwhile, the most that can be said about any notion of a coming renascence is that it may have the energizing value of a myth: it is perhaps akin in its tonic effect on the spirit to the conception of the general strike which Georges Sorel proclaimed should be the heroic myth of the proletariat in its long struggle.

Now if we compare the theory of American Humanists with the theories or partly worked out theories of their allies in Europe, we shall see that we have at home not the least developed and least positive form of conservatism. The Europeans either come to rest on Catholicism (Chesterton, Belloc, Massis, Maritain), which for many Americans seems impossible, involving an act of too much faith, and furthermore they feel too *psychologically* distant from Rome; or the Europeans dedicate themselves to some political movement such as French royalism (Maurras and his disciples) which to some extent perverts their classical attitude; or finally they fall back on some personal philosophy, scarcely more than a strong predisposition in favor of the disinterested activity of the mind (Benda) or else very much in the forming and full of idiosyncrasies (Wyndham Lewis). American Humanism has not complicated itself by theological alliances, nor subordinated itself to the pursuit of definite political aims. What is striking is the extent to which it has freed itself from the personal and idiosyncratic. It exists apart from the personalities of More and Babbitt.

Here is a body of general ideas, substantial yet pliable, to which all who seize the few underlying principles may resort and from which all may take a working experimental outlook on the problems of their own lives. Here is a system for the guidance of one's thought, not for its repression and confinement. Here is an ideology too definite to be treated whimsically, but not so rigid as to be unadaptable to the taste of the individual. It has a completeness wanting in the personal philosophies of Lewis and Benda, and it does not appear to many so arbitrary as the doctrines of the Church. *Its great recommendation is that it is founded on the positive critical experimental spirit of modern times.* This in the remainder of the book I shall try to demonstrate.

VI

A CREATIVE CONCEPTION OF MAN

> *"Humanism is the study and practice of the principles of human happiness* uncomplicated *by naturistic dogmas on the one side and religious dogmas on the other."*—G. R. Elliott in *Humanism and America.*

Humanism is a term that has been defined, and well defined, many times. Yet there persists in the public mind the feeling that Humanism is a portmanteau word and the New Humanists have failed to make it denote anything precise. The public is not to blame for this feeling, nor are the New Humanists responsible. Several causes may be alleged, the first being the romanticizing of the word by writers like Walter Pater. "For the essence of humanism," Pater once wrote, "is that belief of which he (Pico della Mirandola) seems never to have doubted, that nothing which has ever interested living men and women can wholly lose its vitality—no language they have spoken, nor oracle beside which they have hushed their voices, no dream which has once been entertained by actual human minds, nothing about which they have ever been passionate, or expended time and zeal." This is to make Humanism denote simply an all-embracing curiosity, an insatiable appetite for everything, no matter how trivial. *Humani nihil a me alienum puto*

(I consider nothing human alien to me)—this widely quoted line is the motto of those who take Pater's definition too seriously. But the line is spoken in Terence's play as an excuse for meddling, and Babbitt comments drily that it "might serve appropriately enough as a motto for the humanitarian busybody with whom we are all so familiar nowadays, who goes around with schemes for reforming almost everything—except himself." No, Humanism means more than a universal curiosity about one's fellow creatures, and it does not mean humanitarianism. The humanitarians, however, have claimed the gracious word, and this is the second cause of confusion as to definition.

It is essential to see that Humanism and humanitarianism are quite distinct. "A person who has sympathy for mankind in the lump," to quote from Babbitt, "faith in its future progress, and desire to serve the great cause of this progress, should be called not a humanist, but a humanitarian." Such a person—he is legion!—exalts sympathy, and expects that somehow in the coming years man's altruistic impulses will triumph over his egoism. He is an optimist, an ardent believer in the dogma of progress, and usually a superstitious worshipper of modern science. *Exempli gratia:* Auguste Comte, Rousseau and Herder have at one time or another been hailed as "humanists," whereas, Babbitt asserted in his first book, they are properly called humanitarian enthusiasts. So today we sometimes read in our newspapers that certain former Unitarian preachers are Humanists, despite the fact that their sermons upon examination

prove to be almost pure humanitarianism, or we hear writers like the American historian, Harry Elmer Barnes, referred to as a Humanist. But Barnes, we may say in passing, would have seemed to Matthew Arnold the propagandist for a "spurious and degenerated sub-form" of Hellenism. Arnold would doubtless have dubbed this very vocal rationalist simply a Millite, a word he coined from the name of England's famous utilitarian philosopher. Humanism, properly understood, is in fact the stern critic of philanthropic rationalists like Barnes or sentimental enthusiasts like the Reverend John Haynes Holmes. *For Humanism is a doctrine and a discipline, aristocratic in temper, selective in practice, which makes its first concern, the self-perfecting of the individual.*

There is still a third cause which must be touched on to explain the confusion that blankets the public mind. In the literary campaign staged against the New Humanists in the spring of 1930, the naturalistic writers employed an old debating trick:—to pretend bewilderment at the definitions offered and to press for closer and closer definitions. The aim apparently was to force the New Humanists at last into some utterly rigid statement of their creed, if not into some ultimate banality; therefore anything short of a completely rigid definition was called an inadequate one. But the New Humanist is too awake to the dangers of Neo-Classicism to yield to this type of pressure. Humanism lays the stress on the inner life, Neo-Classicism on the external conventions. The New Humanist maintains the seat of authority in himself: he studies with zeal the wisdom stored in tradition, but he

insists on his internal corroboration of that wisdom as the all-important thing. He does not, that is, set up an authority, as the Neo-Classicist does, which is completely exterior to himself. Above all, he perceives the folly of an Age of Rules, which happens whenever Neo-Classicism gains ascendency. In short, if the New Humanism could be set forth in a perfectly dry detailed code, you may be certain that it would not be Humanism, but only another recurrence of Neo-Classicism. A true definition of Humanism must breathe with the vitality inherent in its subject.

The New Humanist, then, disassociates himself from the impoverishment of Neo-Classicism, from excessive purism, as consciously as he separates himself from indiscriminate humanitarianism and the mere inquisitiveness of the æsthetic type. As was said above, Humanism is a doctrine and a discipline, aristocratic in temper, selective in practice, which makes its first concern, the self-perfecting of the individual. This sense for the term is not new or perverse; it has, in fact, long been emphasized as the following passage from a late Latin writer, Aulus Gellius, will show. Gellius was of a somewhat crabbed and pedantic temper: Babbitt admits this and adds that he was too much inclined to leave sympathy out altogether; but what is interesting is that in the decadence of Rome Gellius made complaint about the corruption of the term *humanitas* to give it a humanitarian flavor. Here is his protest—it might have been written yesterday—against the confusion of humanism with humanitarianism.

"Those who created the Latin language," the passage occurs in the *Noctes Atticae,* "and those who spoke it well do not give the word *humanitas* the vulgar meaning which is synonymous with the Greek word *philanthropia,* which means an active kindness, a tender benevolence for all men. But they give the word the meaning which the Greeks attach to *paideia,* which we call education, knowledge of the fine arts. Those who show the most taste and disposition for these studies are the most worthy to be called *humanissimi.* For man alone among all living beings is able to devote himself to cultivating a study which for that reason has been called *humanitas.* Such is the meaning given to this by the ancients, particularly by Varro and Cicero. Almost all their works show examples, so I shall content myself with quoting one only. I have chosen the opening of the first book of Varro 'Concerning Human Things': *Praxiteles, qui propter artificium egregium nemini est paulum modo humaniori ignotus* (Praxiteles, whose excellent talent as an artist has made him known to every man at all skilled in the arts). Here *humanior* does not bear the vulgar meaning of easy, tractable, benevolent, even though lacking in knowledge of letters. That meaning would not express the author's thought. It means an educated, a learned man, one who is acquainted with Praxiteles through books and history."

What is the doctrine of the New Humanism? The most compact statement I have found was written by Robert Shafer in the course of a powerful polemical article in the *Bookman.* It deserves the most careful study by

the reader, for from it can be extracted almost the whole of Humanism. It is a remarkably comprehensive formulation: despite its brevity it manages to imply all that a New Humanist has to say about his conception of man.

"Against romanticism, humanitarian sympathy, mechanistic or vitalistic determinism, the doctrine of progress and the like, has been opposed a skeptical criticism of life and letters which rests ultimately on the proposition that man differs not alone in complexity of organization, but in kind, from the animal, and that his happiness depends upon his recognition and cultivation of that element in his being which is distinctive of him. This is held to be possible; man is held to be, within limits, capable of responsible choice. This capacity is regarded as the core of the distinctively human element in man's constitution, which is thus dual—'animal,' one may roughly say, united inexplicably with 'something more,' or the unlimited chaos of impressions and spontaneous desires united with the potential capacity of control and reduction to ordered activity. No conclusion is necessarily implied for or against the doctrine of grace, but insistence is steady that without a wisely directed educational discipline and a strict inner discipline man's fulfilment of his proper end is certainly impossible. To choose is to discriminate, and, for this, habituation to self-restraint is essential; it is, indeed, the foundation on which the whole structure of distinctively human life rests.

"It is recognized that this general position is not susceptible of rational proof—reason itself being the organ

of discrimination, and acting, when it acts legitimately, in a purely instrumental capacity. But none the less his position is, the humanist adds, irrefutable and soundly based. It concerns a realm of being into which 'modern science' simply does not enter. Exact science, so-called, is concerned with quantity—how much?—but about quality—how good?—it has nothing to say. The humanist is concerned, not with physical existence taken by itself, but with distinctively human excellence, or self-fulfilment, or, in a word, happiness. Here the one possible appeal is to actual human experience—the recorded experience of past generations and the inner experience of the individual disciplined and formed in the light of selective tradition. The strength of humanism lies in its positive experiential basis, which affords it, not an absolute, but a sufficient, authority."

Could the sum and substance of Humanism be put more plainly than the above? The topic can be expanded, explained, illustrated, but in the end when it is boiled down again, we shall find that Robert Shafer has given the candid and accurate summary of its meaning. Greater rigidity would be inexact—remember that words like "idealism," "skepticism," "deism," even "pragmatism" offer a similar necessary fluidity to the definer—for the thing defined has flowing contours and is alive with movement. What then is the difficulty many inquirers about Humanism confess to experiencing when it comes to seizing its import? Well, our difficulties with understanding definitions are not entirely with words; they are of two kinds: verbal and psychological. The first is more

easily overcome: it requires simply a clear statement and attentive reading. In view of the fulness with which More and Babbitt, Foerster and Shafer and many others have written about the meaning of Humanism, there is no excuse whatever for any failure to grasp verbally what they are driving at. A college student could write it out on an examination paper. But the other kind of difficulty, the psychological obstacle to understanding, is the one that takes real effort to remove. By understanding a definition psychologically, I mean experiencing the definition. I mean relating it to one's own experience or lack of experience. I mean filling the verbal signs with living personal content.

I will give one simple illustration of the gap between verbal understanding and psychological comprehension. A good deal of the vocabulary of warfare is used by both soldiers and civilians. The counters are the same, but what the soldier has experienced as the meaning of these words—"No-man's Land," "trenches," "battle," etc.—is radically different from the mere verbal associations the civilian makes with them. The soldier and the civilian try to converse: it is well known that the returned soldier quickly gives up and refuses to talk about his war experiences except to those who have had an actual taste of battle. The civilian wonders why the soldier is uncommunicative about the war and never guesses that it is partly because the soldier has become aware that what to him are signs of experience are to the civilian simply words, as we say.

Now in the case of Humanism this disparity in ex-

perience between the expounder and the listener does not exist. There is a ground of human experience common to all that can be appealed to. But how to reach it? Here the reader must exercise his good will, must be honest with himself, must make an effort to carry the interpretation over from words to experience, to take it out of the verbal forest of the mind and apply it to all his psychology. This means in many cases an effort against the habits of education we have received, for the latest reformers in education are correct in telling us that our civilization is too exclusively verbal, that we trust too much in words cut off from things. Such a psychological translation of the perfectly clear verbal answers already given to the question, what is twentieth century Humanism, I now propose to attempt.

The final object of the New Humanist is happiness. If he is asked, why discipline oneself, why try to live in a certain way, his candid reply is, to attain happiness. All his system-making is directed toward that end, and that end, happiness, happens to be one of the very few values unquestioned by human beings, for who in a state of happiness could conceivably question his own happiness?

Here there is practically no barrier to what I have called the psychological understanding or, perhaps better, realization of humanistic doctrine. For every one knows at first hand the state of happiness: it has come to him accidentally, it has been fleeting, but brief and chance as its visitations have been, the impression of them is indelible.

We long all our lives to re-experience happiness, and we are incredibly ingenious in trying to find it. The cynical are no exception: their cynicism about happiness arises from repeated failures to rediscover it, and their real wish is still for that on which they pour (why so bitter?) ridicule.

Mankind universally hopes for happiness. It flees from the unhappy state and looks everywhere for the acknowledged good thing, the state of being happy. The sad platitude is that mankind fails first to find as much happiness as it wants, second, to maintain the state when it is experienced, and third, to gain an insight into the secrets of producing happiness. Not on happiness as the ultimate human value, but on the way to happiness, the means of procuring it, is there disagreement.

The majority—a fact that has always struck wise men with astonishment—have always depended on distractions and pleasures. They have situated the source of happiness in the world around them. They have felt that a change in the environment was what was needed. Make the world an Eden, say the reformers, and man will be happy. But the Garden of Eden, like the Kingdom of Heaven, is within, has been the retort of the sage.

The New Humanism commits itself first of all to a serious study of the principles of happiness. It does not dream of a geographical Paradise, but says, look to human nature! What is the constitution of human nature? How ought man to live according to this constitution? For in no other way but by obeying the laws of his being can he win an enduring happiness.

But here is where an apparent paradox deludes so many. Man is not born free, as Rousseau claimed, but born slave to things. Things are in the saddle and ride mankind, and mankind expects to be happy under those conditions. To change the conditions, to come out from servitude to things to a command over them—the aim of the religious and the humanistic alike—is so arduous and perilous a revolt that it looks like anything but the way to happiness. Man's *inclination* is to remain enslaved to things the while he hopes they will not ride him harshly. His *wish* is to oppose his inclination to servitude, and to fight his way to psychological freedom. He cannot however imagine that he can be happy warring against his attachment to things. And yet Thoreau speaks for all the sagacious reflecters on life when he says: "But men labor under a mistake. The better part of the man is soon ploughed into the soil for compost. By a seeming fate, commonly called necessity, they are employed, as it says in an old book, laying up treasures which moth and rust will corrupt and thieves break through and steal. It is a fool's life, as they will find when they get to the end of it, if not before."

The New Humanist maintains that human consciousness is dual. This is the primary fact to be recognized, he says, in any quest of happiness. He expresses this fact by speaking of our two selves, which he calls the natural self and the human self, or the animal and human selves or the lower and higher self. In respect to this terminology, admittedly crude, it must be kept in mind that the New

Humanist writes as a practical psychologist, not as a theoretical one who also has to drop technical language and speak in the world's tongue when it comes to practical psychology, and it must be still more kept in mind that no moral connotations are meant by the terms. If I say that plants are a lower form of life than animals, I do not imply that plants are reprehensible for their lesser development—nor does the New Humanist regard the life of the body as morally inferior to, let us say, the life of the mind. The grading is made in the scientific spirit: it is based on measurement of life, not on moral requirements. The discrimination between lower and higher is psychological, and nothing else.

Surely, no elaborate documentation is needed to establish the fact that there is an overwhelming crowd of witnesses from antiquity onwards to the existence of a practical dualism in human psychology. Two eloquent writers will stand for the multitude: Cicero in antiquity and Matthew Arnold in the nineteenth century. They can be combined in a single quotation from the latter's *Literature and Dogma.* "Man alone of living creatures, Cicero says, goes feeling after 'the discovery of an *order,* a law of *good taste,* a *measure* for his words and actions.' Other creatures submissively follow the law of their nature; man alone has an impulse leading him to set up some other law to control the bent of his nature." That is, a goldfish or a wren or a crocodile or a cat is always true to its species. Nature looks to it that they obey, as it were, the conscience of their species. They behave strictly as they should, being what they are. They are

loyal to themselves. But man is not so completely cared for. He belongs to a very elastic species: his behavior can vary enormously and fall far away from the norm of the race. We have words to indicate this drop from what we instinctively feel man should be, such words as "bestial," "sub-human," "inhuman," "unmanly," and the like. Nature apparently is interested in man only up to a certain point, giving him a human form, the capacity to feel, the ability to think, but for all Nature cares, he may be as disordered as he pleases in his emotional and mental life. An idiot, from the standpoint of Nature, is as good as a genius. From this arises man's sense of division in himself. He is a natural creature; true; but add that in comparison with the beasts and their constant observance of their laws he appears a crazed natural creature. But, a strange thing, he has the intuition that he also has the possibility of becoming a sane creature. Only—he himself must learn what sanity is, what its laws are and how to follow them.

He has, in Arnold's words, "the notion of a whole self as opposed to a partial self, a best self to an inferior, to a momentary self a permanent self requiring the restraint of impulses a man would naturally have indulged;—because by *attending* to his life, man found it had a scope beyond the wants of the present moment." I wish to bring home, if I can, the nature of what is here called our partial, inferior, momentary self, and to do so I shall call upon the studies of the Behavioristic psychologists. What the New Humanist terms our lower natural self is in my opinion best named our mechanical self.

The Behaviorists consider man to be a behaving mechanism. Man has nothing to say about his heredity, his birth, his early environment, the language and customs he is taught, and so forth. He comes into the world with the native disposition to make certain responses (unlearned responses) and he soon is trained on the basis of these to make thousands of others (conditioned responses), often of a very arbitrary character. A response-mechanism set ticking and continued in motion by the ceaseless impact of stimuli from the environment.

Physiologically, we are, every one admits, best viewed as machines. Our tissues repair themselves, our blood flows through an elaborate system whose tracings we know only by hearsay (i.e., by diagram), our nails and hair grow without our supervision, we are unaware of the functioning of organs like the liver, unless they get out of order,—but it is unnecessary to specify details of what every one grants: namely, that the ceaseless movements of our bodies do not depend very much on our accurate and intimate knowledge of them, nor upon our directive powers. We stand toward them in the relation of mechanician to machine, only we are rather poor mechanicians and in our ignorance frequently harm what we are supposed merely to tend.

But the Behaviorist enormously extends the reign of mechanics: he puts our psychology—or what we call our psychology—under mechanical rule, going so far as to reduce our emotions to visceral tensions and our thoughts to sub-vocal movements in the larynx. In this he is far more right than most people think. But we do not need

to argue that out now. I refer to very obvious matters, such as the occurrence of emotions to us. *They occur to us:* we do not as a rule induce them. "A peculiar feeling came over me," we say. It did! "I was seized by anger." I was! "I was taken by surprise." Right! Every day long we are swept by a succession of emotions, the majority of which clearly we had nothing to do with. We did not choose to experience them. They came to us.

Again there is a constant procession—better say jumble —of images, ideas, associations, words and nonsense in our minds. Our brains wander most of the time: they are as Arnold Bennett calls them "gentlemen-at-large" and deucedly unreliable. They go on operating after a fashion whether we will or not. And what is this but sheer mechanicality?

But this is our natural self, this is as biology and sociology have made us. We take stock of ourselves in adulthood and we find probably that we are a pronounced type —an intellectual, a highly emotional artist, a sportsman. Did we create our type, our particular psychological build, any more than we colored our eyes or invented the shoes we Westerners wear? Our temperament—did we make it or do we find ourselves with one?

A very great deal of what we call ourselves we have to consign to the Behaviorist and agree with him that it is determined. But the New Humanist will not yield all to Dr. John B. Watson and his relentless observers in the laboratory. He will not deny consciousness, nor the will, nor higher potentialities than are manifest in the animal self. He balances against the mechanical the human self

which, he maintains, man can develop. What, more precisely than thus far stated, is meant by the human self? We can get at the conception if we think of our potentialities.

Actually, we are turned out by Nature and Society as uneven-sided human beings, not well-rounded ones. Actually, we are prejudiced and partial, not unprejudiced and impartial. Actually, our minds are enslaved, not free. Actually, we are nonsensical, not commonsensible. But we have the potentiality for all these things we have not, —for harmonious development of ourselves, for disinterestedness and impartiality, for the free intelligence and the most esoteric of all virtues, commonsense. Only none of these things ever comes to man as a gift. Each must be deliberately and laboriously acquired. Man, then, humanistically viewed, is born with a lower self but has a margin of potentiality which he, and only he, can cultivate, and by so doing he creates a higher self to which it is proper to give the name human. Acquirements, not gifts—that is the sure mark of the truly human. (Incidentally, the greatest of these acquirements is will, but of that later.)

At the risk of seeming unable to let go of the idea of a cleft between the natural man and self-perfected man, I will cite one illustration of the difference between our actual psychology and our potential psychology. Man has the possibility of simultaneous thought on several different subjects, but this possibility is never actualized by accident in the ordinary course of events. Ordinarily we think in succession, following a train of thought, as

we say. But we can, by special training, learn to follow several lines of thought at once. One begins with very simple exercises (immensely difficult to the beginner, however), such as focussing on the movement of the second-hand of a watch, reciting a stanza of poetry, and running through a multiplication table at the same time, and then works up to what appear staggering exercises in mental gymnastics. For this sort of work, at which geniuses fail the first time as completely as the most ungifted, the natural self is of no avail. Simultaneous thought becomes an actuality only to those who themselves bring it to birth.

It seems strange that any one should deny on any practical basis the selves of the New Humanist's conception: one, largely or altogether automatic, actual, natural, subject to the "law for thing," the other acquired, born out of potentiality by one's own effort, not natural but human, subject to the "law for man." Yet this dualism has been fought throughout recorded history. Many gifted men have made frenzied efforts to deny the gap, to coalesce the two selves, to prove that man not only theoretically but practically must be monistic. One of the latest epical mass-movements to deny psychological dualism was Romanticism.

Submission to the natural self is the Romantic attitude. Here, I believe, we can strike rock bottom. As sketched above, a human being consists of three related modes of experience (sensations, emotions, and ideas) and in these three modes everything, according to the Behaviorist, a

very great deal according to everybody, is done not by our consent and knowledge, but, as it were, by itself. But toward such a threefold apparatus for experiencing, an attitude may be assumed, and this attitude is fundamental in our psychology. Given one kind of attitude, and you get the foundation of Romanticism. Another attitude toward the selfsame creature, and you have laid the cornerstone of the humanistic life. Who or what takes the attitude? Whatever we mean by the word "I." The Romanticist glories in identifying as closely as possible whatever the word "I" means with his mechanical self. He resigns his Ego to his organism. He submits to the riot of his senses, feelings and thoughts and calls the submission good.

It might be said, I suppose, that earlier in this book I scored an easy victory by putting in contrast a composite figure, quite lacking in "personality," with Matthew Arnold. Of course, it might be retorted to me, Arnold is superior to any constructed representative of modern men. Arnold should rather be compared with some great Romantic, not with an instructive psychological chart. Very well: in the place of that poor G. R. we unfeelingly exposed, let us put Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the man of genius who preached so eloquently the surrender to our natural selves.

Irving Babbitt has often been accused of "Rousseauphobia." I cannot find the justice in the accusation, which ignores Babbitt's reasons for emphasizing Rousseau's influence. Babbitt cannot be said to have slighted the precursors of Rousseau, such as Hutcheson and the Earl

of Shaftesbury, or not to have put a great deal of weight on Francis Bacon as a founder of the modern world. And it is true, as Babbitt claims, that though Rousseauistic ideas were in the world long before Rousseau, it was the Genevan who gave them their great driving power in our era: it was Rousseau who cast the wonderful glamor over them that made them irresistible to modern man. Rousseau is the representative Romantic. He is the symbolic figure, and hence he is bound to appear very large in any treatment of Romanticism. Furthermore, the extent and depth of his influence can hardly be minimized, as the enormous literature written about him shows. Let it be Rousseau then to serve here, as in so many previous expositions, as the arch-exponent of the Romantic attitude.

He accepted the contradictions in himself, saying that his heart and his mind did not seem to belong to the same person. He scorned the intellect, the weakest and least developed of our three modes of experience, saying that the man who thinks is a depraved animal. He gave the primacy to feeling, and exalted sensation. He declared that man was corrupted by Society and that man was naturally good. He developed on his own account, as Maritain says, "a singular doctrine of absolute non-resistance to the impulses of sensation, a doctrine of complete passivity as the condition of full expansion of the primitive goodness, which is simply a natural quietism." Yes; the "Father of the modern world" was an irresponsible. For he loved, nay he worshipped, that irresponsible creature, the natural self.

The natural self is innocent: that is, it is neither good

nor bad. Good or bad can only appear in the attitude taken toward the natural self. The Romantic with all his enthusiasm follows the inclinations of the natural self. He shirks the disciplining of it. He wants unity but he thinks he can find unity by subsiding into the life of feeling and sensation, stilling the mind. He goes with Nature, like a child led by its nurse, and he calls it liberty.

At the end of Romanticism there is the pseudo-necromancer of Vienna with his complicated method for teaching the proud spirit of Man to stoop, to chain itself to the blind forces of his temperament, to forget in slavery to the senses and feelings that man is in essence a passion for perfection.

Responsibility for the natural self is the Humanist attitude. Like the Romanticist, the Humanist discovers that whatever is signified by the word "I"—and the determination of the signification of the word "I" is a poser for the infant science of psychology *—is attached to a surprising creature, unreasonable, expansive, changeable, an absorbing mystery to study. He finds furthermore that the creature has the complete upper hand so far as the "I" in it is concerned. But the Humanist cannot acquiesce in this arrangement. It seems to him that the creature is not wicked but certainly a fool. There is noth-

* In a very interesting paper written shortly before his death G. Stanley Hall recounted his experiences among phrenologists, anthropologists, "character analysts," psycho-analysts and intelligence testers for real light on the nature of "I." The results were so meagre that at the end of his life he could still say: "I want to strip before analyzers who can diagnose not only my abilities, but my character, disposition, merits, and defects, and tell me, even at the eleventh hour, *who and what I really am.*" (My italics.)

ing wrong with its appetites, only the organism is singularly unintelligent in gratifying them. It is full of whims, some of them dangerous to the organism's life. It loves to waste time in day-dreaming, to waste emotion in foolish anxieties, to waste energy in muscular fidgets. Clearly, the creature itself would be happier if it were under intelligent guidance, if it were taught to obey instead of always being given the reins and dashing away at random. Thus, the New Humanist feels that his real, deepest self is somewhat apart from his natural mechanical self. He wants to be the driver of his machine, not a mere intoxicated passenger in a runaway vehicle. He wants to be responsible for the manifestations of his personality. In responsibility for his natural self lies for him the dignity of man. This for him is the true liberty.

But how to attain and exercise this liberty? For, to begin with, the workings of the natural self are not known to the one who wishes to master it. Hence, the humanistic stress on self-study and self-knowledge. But further, even granting a fairly complete working knowledge of oneself, of what one's biases and characteristic reactions are, what one's defects and points of strength are, one may still be at a total loss, powerless to alter or control the spontaneous phenomena of the organism. Hence, the humanistic stress on the need for developing the will.

The New Humanist upholds a creative conception of man. The word "creative" has been so cheapened by Romantic usage in which it is made synonymous with mere

temperamental overflow that one is almost inclined to drop the word until it loses its present indiscriminate associations. However, no other word will do to describe the humanistic conception of man, for in the Humanist's view man literally creates his manliness. Man has to find his own center, develop his own potentialities, create his own order in his psychology.

We can put the matter thus. Every one without exception has felt that his psychology was organized about a principle of dispersion. His inclinations have pointed outwards; he wants to let himself go, he yearns to express himself. "You must be yourself," said Jean-Jacques Rousseau over and over, and in his mouth it meant what Maritain says it did. "You must *be* your feeling, as God *is* His being. Does God, Who is all act, need forming? You must regard as a sin every attempt to form yourself, or allow yourself to be formed, to right yourself, to bring your discords to unity again. Every form imposed on the inner world of the human soul, whether it come from nature or grace, is a sacrilegious wrong to nature." This is psychology based on the Many.

But just as there is a metaphysic of the One as well as the Many, so there is a psychology of the One. Every one without exception, I daresay, has felt in his psychology a principle of unity. He has experienced, that is, at various moments a strong wish to integrate himself, to pull himself together, to become a concentrated unified individual. It is with this wish the New Humanist identifies the human, and he pits it against the inclination

to accept the discords. The wish for unity is the creative wish.

What could be more uncreative than the despising of the mind by Luther, Rousseau and scores of lesser Romantics? The mind, a part of our resources to be exploited along with the other parts—why should it be treated puritanically any more than the body should be despised? Again what can be more uncreative than to transfer the blame for one's faults to Society, or to make a cult of inaction as Rousseau did? The New Humanist replies that the fault after all is not in our stars or in Society but in ourselves and that we must work upon ourselves—a genuinely creative attitude.

I direct attention again to human potentialities. Proportionateness—it must be created. The free intelligence —it must be struggled for. Disinterestedness—an ideal toward which no step is ever taken without effort. Commonsense, the fusion of mental, emotional and practical judgments—it must be striven for. Self-control—impossible without the use of will. The will—dormant, it must be awaked. Unity—it must be achieved.

These, according to the New Humanist, are some of our higher possibilities. He takes the attitude that a man's work is to bring them towards fruition, that in so doing lies happiness, that by so doing one is truly creative, making and strengthening a human self to oppose and dominate the vagaries and weaknesses of the natural self.

VII

THE DISCIPLINE OF HUMANISM

> *"My whole method is experimental, or it might be less ambiguous to say if the word were a fortunate one, experiential."*—IRVING BABBITT in *Rousseau and Romanticism.*

IT is obvious that the New Humanist does not think there is much insight in Walt Whitman's line, "And if the body were not the soul, what is the soul?" We can epitomize the preceding chapter and at the same time add a new element by extracting two sentences from Babbitt's *Rousseau and Romanticism.* "Like all the great Greeks Aristotle recognizes that man is the creature of two laws: he has an ordinary or natural self of impulse and desire and a human self that is known practically as a power of control over impulse and desire. If man is to become human he must not let impulse and desire run wild, but must oppose to everything excessive in his ordinary self, whether in thought or deed or emotion, the law of measure." The new element, the law of measure, relates to discipline. I have dealt with the major conception in the Humanist doctrine: I have shown that the New Humanism is primarily individualistic and for the sake of individual growth: I described it as aristocratic in temper. The last is surely evident from the humanistic stress on the rule of our momentary ordinary selves by our

best selves, and from the Humanist's search in the inherited literatures for "the best that has been thought and uttered," and finally from his making the question of leadership the paramount problem for democratic nations to solve. But in the general description of the New Humanism I noted in addition that it was a discipline and selective in practise, and these are the matters of this chapter.

Here again we have to combat psychological obtuseness. To repeat: a logical understanding of a text is one thing, and quite another is a living warm apprehension, a psychological understanding, of the same text. The first is an affair of words: the second is more real, related to feelings and conduct as well as to the formulating intellect. Now it so happens that it is a peculiarity of our age to be blank-minded whenever there is question of a psychological method to realize in practice the ideas and ideals we adopt. We think that the mere entertaining of the ideas and ideals we are attracted by is sufficient, we think that we shall naturally grow to embody them completely without the need of any special discipline or "way of life." In short, never do we inquire into "ways of life" at all, never do we exercise the kind of thought Arnold employed when he sought in the Biblical texts for the *method* and *secret* of Jesus. In dealing with the New Humanism in its aspect of a technique for living intelligently, we must therefore make a special and unusual effort to see the theory in terms of actual practice.

There is no initial difficulty in feeling the spirit of the New Humanist discipline, for though it derives from

Aristotle, it is as thoroughly modern as the laboratory spirit. No one could in fact be a stauncher supporter of the modern spirit defined by Irving Babbit as "the positive and critical spirit, the spirit that refuses to take things on authority" than Babbitt himself. Only, he adds, you must be a complete positivist. He then goes on to exhort his readers to be individualists: "the man who plants himself, not on outer authority but on experience, is an individualist." Aristotle, Babbitt takes to be the arch-type of the positive and critical Humanist, for Aristotle teaches us "how to have standards and at the same time not to be immured in dogma." All this, as I say, is quite in the modern spirit and goes to explain the appeal Babbitt exercises on many young Americans who cannot be accused of yearning for some long-gone age and whose defection from the banners of Menckenism has puzzled some people.

At this point should be brought up the Babbittean distinguishing of three levels on which life may be experienced: the religious, the humanistic, and the naturalistic. The naturalistic we have seen exemplified by a host of Rousseauists and Baconians, of sentimentalists and utilitarians, of all those who in one way or another submerge Man into Nature. The religious level is occupied by the great systems of Buddhism and Christianity. Here the supernatural enters, here the consuming search is for the Absolute, here there is dying to this world and here there is the life more abundant that comes through rebirth into a world of greater consciousness. The *via media* is alleged to be the humanistic life, represented in the past

by Confucianism in the Orient and by Aristotelianism in the Occident. The middle way has, as outlined by Babbitt, its special methodology, its special virtues, and its special attitudes. For example, we have already noticed its hostile attitude toward Naturalism, its clash with Naturalism on first principles. On the other hand, its attitude toward those who work on the religious plane is sympathetic. Quotations bearing on this could be accumulated but a recent utterance by Irving Babbitt will do for all. "For my own part," he said in *Humanism and America,* "I range myself unhesitatingly on the side of the supernaturalists. Though I see no evidence that humanism is necessarily ineffective apart from dogmatic and revealed religion, there is, it seems to me, evidence that it gains immensely in effectiveness when it has a background of religious insight."

But to the New Humanist the reasons for risking one's life on the religious level do not, one judges, seem overwhelming. Here is one of Babbitt's statements on that point, a statement on which I reserve comment for the present. "I have been struck," he says cannily, "in my study of the past by the endless self-deception to which man is subject when he tries to pass too abruptly from the naturalistic to the religious level. The world, it is hard to avoid concluding, would have been a better place if more persons had made sure they were human before setting out to be superhuman; and this consideration would seem to apply with special force to a generation like the present that is wallowing in the trough of naturalism. After all to be a good humanist is merely to be

moderate and sensible and decent. It is much easier for a man to deceive himself and others regarding his supernatural lights than it is regarding the degree to which he is moderate and sensible and decent."

Though Babbitt seems to emphasize here the fear of self-deception as the main ground for preferring the humanistic plane to the religious, the New Humanist can actually make out a very strong case based on hard commonsense. A. R. Orage, the finest living English literary critic, has suggested what the sensible attitude, in the present state of our knowledge, should be toward religion. So interesting a point of view justifies a rather lengthy quotation.

"Suppose that a remote posterity, unversed in mathematics and the scientific research equipment of our age, should inherit one of our current science manuals. There they would read or, rather decipher, such statements as that light travels at the rate of 186,000 miles a second; that the sun is 92 million miles distant from the earth, and that the light of the nearest star takes four and a half light years to reach us. What would they make of it all? Some of them, it is probable, would hold that their forerunners must have possessed a faculty lost to themselves and in consequence would attach a mystical significance to the unverifiable dogmas; they might even repeat these dogmas as possibly magical formulas. But undoubtedly the best common sense of the day, in the absence of the means of verification, would dismiss the statements as being childish guesses or, at best, as barbarous abracadabra. Only a very few would suspect that perhaps we were not

such fools as we appeared, and give us suspended credit for a method behind our madness. But our method itself and the instruments we employ would be still to seek.

"The foregoing picture may serve to illustrate what may possibly—let us say no more than possibly—be our own situation in regard to the ancient 'science' of religion. We have inherited a few of the textbooks once circulated among the illuminati of more or less extinct civilizations, and we find them to contain statements of equal exactitude and incredibility concerning things of which we have no verifiable knowledge, as that there is a God Who is a trinity of Persons, Who created the Universe according to Reason, and Man in his own image, and Who placed us in the world with potentialities of consciously becoming like unto Himself. Some of us today are disposed, like our imagined descendants, to take these traditional statements mystically; to repeat them as magical formulas; and to assume that a lost faculty, the so-called religious sense, was possessed by our ancestors of ancient Egypt, India, Persia and Syria. So relatively powerful, in fact, are these that their attitude towards the inherited dogmas of ancient religion is still the standard of respectability. The weight of common sense, however, is slowly but surely making itself felt; and the day is not far off when the intelligence of our civilization will explicitly decline even to be interested in grandiose statements apparently insusceptible of proof. Only a few, a very few, will continue to suspect that perhaps the Egyptians, the Buddhists, the Pythagoreans and the Gnostics were people

very like ourselves in respect of faculty and unlike us only in the same respect in which we shall differ from a remote posterity without our science, namely, in the possession, not of a lost faculty, but of a lost method or technique. And for these few, too, the method or technique is still to seek—or perhaps only to recognize."

The foregoing is more than a caution against the easy specification of what religious experience is; it also reinforces the attitude—a strictly modern one which most of the New Humanists adopt—of wariness toward the religious life. But can we find in our ordinary diurnal living anything that corresponds to the humanistic way and to the naturalistic way? Nothing is simpler than to exemplify the latter, for we all live naturalistically most of the time. Most men, Thoreau observed, lead lives of quiet desperation. Most men must work for their livelihood, and the work they are driven to do holds little or no attraction for them. (I do not speak of the increasing number of intolerable jobs an industrial society creates, but rather of the monotonous occupations of many members of the middle class.) The time spent in offices each day is for many men so much time spent in bondage, cut off from their vivid interests: they repine, but succumb to a dull routine. Their permanent mood is one of passive endurance. Like horses they uncomplainingly draw their loads and rejoice when at five o'clock they are let out to pasture. This is a usual and mild instance of merely naturalistic living. The humanistic attitude, on the other hand, is, toward the identical necessity and circumstances, an active one. A curb is put on futile repin-

ing: vain longings are disciplined: the situation is faced with the minimum useless feeling. The question for the Humanist is, granting the inescapable circumstances, how can I make the best use of them to my advantage as a human being? How may I bend them to suit my design in life, how may I gather them into focus? How may I extract from my burdens values that are not accessible to the mere beast of burden? At this point Arnold's triumphant converting of his drab job of school inspecting to the main interests of his life springs to mind as an instance of working on the humanistic level. In other words, where it is a case of the disagreeable inevitability, the Naturalist remains under compulsion from the outside: the Humanist, in contrast, makes an effort to alter his attitude from mere negative endurance to a search for positive results in the way of personal discipline and the discovery of unsuspected values inherent in the day's work. Is his real business in life not the cultivation of the distinctively human, and is not everything grist to that magical mill if one only tries to keep the mill in operation; that is, if one maintains an active attitude toward experience?

But, perhaps some readers are saying, you are merely balancing an act of good sense against the case of unintelligent adjustment: by what right do you label the former humanistic when many avowed Naturalists—Charles Darwin in his years of invalidism, for instance—perform feats of intelligent and heroic overcoming of difficulties? The answer is that the Naturalist often rises above his doctrine just as the Humanist often fails in his discipline, but it

still remains true that it is the Humanist who assigns himself the task of organizing a life based on good sense, while the Naturalist puts his confidence in following, so far as he is permitted by events, the grain of his mechanical self. Have we not inherited the nineteenth century Romantic disparagement of good sense in favor of the imagination?

The central maxim for practising the humanistic life is a crystallization in three words of a large part of Greek wisdom—"Nothing too much." The New Humanists plan to do not less than to restore to its pristine attractiveness the law of measure extolled by Aristotle and called by Horace—so worthy of praise did it seem to that exquisite poet and epicurean—the Golden Mean.

About this I think there is no difficulty in understanding what the New Humanist leaders are driving at. The law of measure is not legalistic; it cannot be codified. Negatively put, it means, avoid excesses. Positively, it means the rule of temperance, but temperance manifested in the mental and emotional realms as well as in the physical. The real difficulty lies in applying measure to our deeds, our thoughts, our feelings, and it is an immense difficulty, demanding what tact and delicacy, what perceptiveness and reflection, what resolution and zeal. In essays by American Humanists we often run upon certain sayings of Pascal which not only illuminate the import of the law of measure but should serve here to enhance the reader's sense of what I have just said about its difficulty in operation.

"Grandeur is not shown by being at one extremity, but in touching both at once, and filling the whole space between," wrote Pascal, and there could not possibly be a better recognition of the *great scope* for the play of human psychology allowed for by the law of measure. "When we would pursue the virtues to their extremes on either side, vices present themselves, which insinuate themselves imperceptibly there, in their insensible course towards the infinitely great, so that we lose ourselves in vices, and no longer see virtues." The history of Romanticism (how often!) testifies to the weight of truth in this saying. The following *pensée* might well be called the essence of the New Humanism. "Excessive or deficient mental powers are alike accused of madness. Nothing is good save mediocrity. To leave the mean is to leave humanity. The greatness of the human soul consists in knowing how to keep the mean. So little is it the case that greatness consists in leaving it, that it lies in not leaving it." That is the reply the New Humanist can make when it is objected that his strictures on eccentric genius are too harsh. "The greatness of the human soul consists in knowing how to keep the mean."

For a genius is often simply an exaggeration of one, and but one, of the three major aspects of a man. For we may say that man is a compound of Knowing, Being and Doing. Exaggerate his wish to know into a lust for knowledge (*libido sciendi*), depress at the same time his wish for Being and Doing, and you get the Gargantuan hungerer for knowledge, the monstrous head and the starved heart and impotent faculty for doing, you get an

encyclopædist, a Diderot (whose heart was active, however) or a Herbert Spencer. Again exaggerate a man's wish for Being, let him despise the acquisition of knowledge and the doing of deeds, and you have the lust for feeling (*libido sentiendi*): you have a genius like Rousseau or Schiller. There is also an inordinate lust for power, for doing (*libido dominandi*), which like the lusts for knowledge and for feeling is all-consuming and warps the development of character, and this time you get a monstrous man of action like Napoleon or like some great industrialists of the present era that any one can name. These incarnations of the three great lusts of human nature excite our wonder and admiration: they fascinate us by their "divine madness." But we remind ourselves that there is also a "divine sanity," and it seems in the character of Plato or Buddha a finer touch of divinity. Babbitt transcribes for us in his argument directed against the *libido sciendi,* the *libido sentiendi,* and the *libido dominandi* the Buddhist proverb: "If one man conquer in battle ten thousand men and another man conquer his own self, he is the greatest of conquerors," and to this he subjoins his own belief that "that man is most human who can check his faculty, even if it be his master-faculty, and his passion, even his ruling passion, in its mid-career, and temper it by its opposite."

In one phrase, then, the Humanist method is mediation between extremes. It is the finding of the middle way, and I hasten to add that the middle way is never found mechanically, never by merely striking an average between two extremes. It is a strait and narrow way,

obvious when it is recognized, but hard to recognize. Finding it is a call upon all of one's experience: effort, thought, observation, a scale of values, spiritual agility, all are needed to make the discovery of the Golden Path.

But useless is all writing about the Golden Mean if man has no power of choice, or potentiality of acquiring a power of choice. As well exhort a beggar to buy a palace! Nothing could be vainer than the formulation of a discipline based on selection, selection and again selection, if there is in man no capability for selecting. According to the Mechanists there is not. They have much truth on their side. In the sense that man is self-ignorant and therefore uncontrolled (for who can control what he does not know?), man *is* a machine. But here is something to ponder on: there is a wide uninvestigated region of man which we may term his potential psychology. Psychology as a science—described truly by its leaders as an infant science—has not yet given us a norm for human psychology, which includes both our actualities and our latencies. An honest worker like Dr. J. B. Watson speaks frankly for all his profession when he says that we have seen no norm, and adds that in his opinion it would be infinitely desirable to find one. The New Humanist, weighing the evidence and testimony of the past, concludes that man has at least the potentialities of gaining self-knowledge and self-control. He therefore seeks to actualize them. He challenges the Mechanists and appeals to our sense of latent psychology. In his effort to build up a working system of psychology based

upon potentialities (our human self) as well as upon actualities (our mechanical self), the New Humanist has been more grotesquely misunderstood than at any other point.

We approach now the meaning of the phrases he uses so often,—"a principle of restraint," "a power of vital control," *"frein vital"* as against *"élan vital,"* "the inner check." I have been through the mass of writings directed against Babbitt's theory, and these terms are harped on with so much irritation that I can only conclude the vocabulary of Babbitt is highly offensive to our age. "Now why the deuce," peevishly writes one of the younger critics, speaking for all of them, "is virtue, with the Humanists, always made to reside exclusively in what Babbitt calls the 'will to refrain'?" In the petulance of that question there is perhaps a clue to the psychology of our age, a psychology so extraordinarily blind that it fails to see that a principle of restraint is only another way of saying a principle of selection, as indeed in Babbitt's writings the two expressions are interchangeable from his first book wherein he spoke of "a humane principle of selection, or what amounts to the same thing, a true principle of restraint." But a very vocal part of our age is infuriated by the very notion of restraint, and we have to interpret this strange fact. Can it be that, as is sometimes charged, this is really an age of weaklings in the arts and philosophies? It is noticeable that men of strength are usually the very men who most feel the need of curbing themselves, that men of rich and powerful personalities are the ones who try hardest to purge themselves

of the merely gratuitous and "temperamental," that men of real passion are the first to acknowledge need of canalizing it. These men are not afraid that a little discipline will take away their precious personalities: they have so much personality that it is precisely discipline they look for. But what is this outcry on the part of so many of our formative writers against the negative admonition? What feebleness of energy and passion is it that is afraid of being strangled by a "power of vital control"? I am driven to think of the reports of sexologists who say that it is the poorly sexed man whose erotic life is one of excessive indulgence, whereas the powerfully sexed are sensible of the need for some moderation of their desires, and I wonder if many a writer in our day, determined to let nothing stop the expression of his soul (the size of an emmet, alas, in so many cases) is not comparable to the unrestrained man of poor sexual powers.

However that may be, the American intellectuals and artists as a body have totally failed to perceive what may be fairly termed the gallantry of the Humanist conception of "a will to refrain." For if we could, as it were, put our ordinary selves under a glass and gaze coolly at them, we should see very numerous and complicated phenomena, a flux subject to endless change and relativity, which except for an infinitesimal fraction we are not aware of at all. This world of impressions, and bodily changes, and variations in feeling goes its own way, and we are, it seems, at its mercy. Have most of us any more control of our mental processes than we have of our glandular secretions? But against this imperious self the Humanist

dares to assert his very deepest self. He dares to say no to its impulsions. He dares to say, though these phenomena *arise* in me, I yet shall deal with these arisings, denying some and permitting others to run their natural course. And it is this assertion that I call gallant. The odds are all against the assertion being made good: the attraction of the ordinary self is almost irresistible; and yet man will struggle to assert his freedom of the ebb and flow of his ordinary life. In positive language, the "will to refrain" is an attempt to strike a blow for freedom.

The principle of restraint is dramatized by Babbitt when he calls it the inner check. It is less metaphorical than many terms appropriated by, let us say, psychoanalysts who speak of a "censor," for example, but still it is only a metaphor. What does it stand for? I find it very difficult to say, for it seems to be on the outskirts of a tremendous conception, a conception that is excessively hard to put into words. Many opponents of American Humanism have thought the inner check to be merely an inhibition, or some streak of puritanism, or in one case an equivalent to what the psycho-analyst means by the censor. As if More and Babbitt were naïve men of limited experience! As if, though trained in skepticism for a lifetime, they would make an error that any fledgeling reviewer could see! No; the meaning of the inner check must be sought in a deeper way if it is to be elicited, and in plumbing for it we must first of all divest ourselves of our usual notions about inhibitions.

Both Babbitt and More have, as a matter of fact, clearly

indicated that they held no ordinary conception when they spoke of the inner check.* The phrase is probably Babbitt's, who derived it from Emerson in whose writings it appeared as the inward check; the inward check was referred by Emerson to Hindu scriptures where the meaning was an inward guide or control. This in itself is sufficient to put us on guard against a quick assumption that we understand what it is all about. But there is another reason, equally strong: Babbitt has several times linked up his sense of an inner check with the dæmon of Socrates, who is made to say in the *Phædrus:* "My divine monitor's wonted sign—now it never occurs save to deter me from something or other I am intending to do." This is why I said above that the More-Babbitt conception of the inner check appears to me to be on the fringe of a tremendous conception, for I have not the effrontery to regard Socrates as naïve in matters of his own psychology. At the same time, what was meant by the ancient idea of a deterring monitor in one's breast and what is now meant by the Babbitt-More derivation? The difficulties of an answer are at once visible.

Something like this may be modestly ventured, how-

* More, I believe, has more intellectualized his conception of the inner check than has Babbitt. I myself prefer the hints of Babbitt on this topic to the explanations of More which seem to me to harden the conception too much. The two men appear also to differ on the will, Babbitt regarding it in the Oriental way as anterior and superior to the reason and the flux of personality, whereas More seems to follow Christian tradition which usually makes the will a mode of activity belonging to the flux. I follow Babbitt in the discussion of will later in my chapter. The reader, however, is advised to consult the *Definitions of Dualism* which More appended to the Eighth Series of the *Shelburne Essays* for full light on these differences and especially for the most ambitious attempt to put the doctrine and discipline of Humanism into a precise philosophic-psychological framework.

ever. Neither ancient nor modern had or has in mind, when speaking of a dæmon or an inner check, what we may call a sociologically formed conscience. By education we have all had instilled in us a kind of pseudo-conscience: in our childhood and youth older people told us definitely what was right and wrong, they traded on our susceptibility, and now that we have grown critical, we learn that these deeply stamped notions of wrong and right are purely relative, often silly, and in some instances downright harmful. Take anything you please—our sense of sexual shame, for one—and any intelligent person today can riddle much of it by simply showing how arbitrarily we have been conditioned. So much depends on social custom! But the inner check and the Socratic dæmon are not, I feel confident, the products of respectable training.

For, to continue with the case of sexual shame, is there not a true shame as well as a pseudo-shame? Is there not a shame so deep, so primitive, that it seems biological, owing nothing to sociology, a shame that when it is violated seems to overthrow the whole being? Pseudo-shame can be almost painlessly removed, but this organic shame, if corrupted, is corrupted only by a violent wrench to one's whole character. It is as though something died in one, whereas when sociological shame is taken away, one feels liberated and even gay.

By my line of reasoning, the inner check conception is to be taken as the faint shadow cast down the ages by the Socratic dæmon, and this dæmon in turn I am half-guessing to be a figure of Conscience. But not conscience

in our sense, the pseudo-function that Society sets going in us, but—how shall I put it?—some abiding developed sense of how it is fitting that the being Man should conduct himself in a life that may be a school of experience, but certainly reveals no easily accessible master of the school.

For fluid as is the nature of man—and few recent writers have better displayed man's fluidity than Joseph Wood Krutch in an essay entitled *The Paradox of Humanism*—there does yet seem to be buried in the creature something, almost non-functioning, which we may agree to call a conscience, since it is independent of social conditioning, and this something, this conscience, sometimes says no in emphatic command. Who is there who, on sincere self-examination, does not find there are a few things he knows with absolute certitude he could never do? No power on earth, no conceivable circumstances, he declares to himself, would make me do thus-and-so. And yet why not do them? There may be no consequences that inspire fear, there may even be strong incentives to take the detested course of action. But something internal says Veto so powerfully that there is no possibility of committing the action. *The action would seem like a betrayal of the species one belongs to!*

The interpretation is here offered then that the inner check works in the interests of some essential humanity in us. It seeks to counteract that fluidity of our nature whereby men become beasts or go mad. It warns us when we are about to desert our adult human standards and retrogress to the puerile or infantile or sub-human.

And now I think of the life of Socrates as we have it: the simple dignity, the steadiness of his passion for self-perfection, the courage of his behavior, and all the multitude of other points of homage the world has paid him. And I see his life as a drama of the true conscience: in his illustrious example, a conscience developed, sensitized, responsive, a marvellous monitor surely directing him as to how it was fit that a member of the human species should live.

The technique of the New Humanism, to sum it up, is mediation under the guidance of the vestiges of true conscience still in our psychology. It is as simple as that, and, I am tempted to add, as tremendous as that. To repeat Pascal's profound words: "To leave the mean is to leave humanity." The inner check or as I take it the vestige of conscience in modern man warns us when we veer toward barbarous extremes. The activity of the inner check is the very heart of the method, but dependent from the principal technique are several lesser techniques which may now be taken up rapidly and schematically. The New Humanist calls them (a) the right use of illusion, (b) the imitation of nature, and (c) decorum.

(a). The Right Use of Illusion. The quotations are from Babbitt's *Rousseau and Romanticism*. "Life does not here give an element of oneness and there an element of change. It gives a *oneness that is always changing*. The oneness and the change are inseparable. Now if what is stable and permanent is felt as real, the side of

life that is always slipping over into something else or vanishing away entirely is, as every student of psychology knows, associated rather with the feeling of illusion . . . The problem of the One and the Many, the ultimate problem of thought, can therefore be solved only by a right use of illusion . . . failure (with the problem of the One and the Many) can be retrieved only by a deeper insight into the imagination and its all-important rôle in both literature and life."

In the above I think we may detect the hand of Joubert who reflected deeply on *illusion et sagesse.* "Joubert," Paul Elmer More says, "conceives it to be the rôle of the imagination, mediating as it does between sense and reason, to lend its magic and glamour to the latter, to throw as it were a veil of divine illusion over some essential truth. . . . The imagination must be really free and spontaneous, and the truth itself must not be too precisely formulated, if we are to arrive at that vital fusing of illusion and insight with the accompanying sense of infinitude that is found in the true symbol."

In the ideal Humanist then the Imagination coöperates with Reason. Its rôle is not debased in order to exalt good sense as happened in the Neo-Classicism of the eighteenth century, nor is it made antagonistic to good sense as was done in the romantic recoil from Pope and other eighteenth century men. Something like the play of Imagination in behalf of Reason as we behold it in Plato is what Babbitt and More contend is the Imagination's highest function.

(b). The Imitation of Nature. "The first point to

observe," notes Babbitt, "is that according to Aristotle one is to get his general nature not on authority or second hand, but is to disengage it directly for himself from the jungle of particulars that he has before his eyes. He is not, says Aristotle, to imitate things as they are, but as they ought to be. Thus conceived, imitation is a creative act. Through all the welter of the actual one penetrates to the real and so succeeds without ceasing to be individual in suggesting the universal." The consideration above is not purely literary. The Humanist with his practical attitude toward the leading of "the good life" tries to form a model before his eyes of what normal representative human nature is and to imitate that. Out of human nature as it actually is he tries to make a general picture of what it ought to be, and to hold that up as a guide for his efforts to become more representative in his own person. Since many people apparently find it hard to receive much meaning from such abstract statements as the preceding, since they are not at once and vividly conscious of the vast difference between a standard of human nature and the average of human nature, I may be pardoned for urgently recommending a close study of Charles Maurras's explicit account of how the normal (or perfect) man appears to his mind and imagination. It is hard to over-estimate the importance of such an attempt as Maurras's. Classicism, if it is to be a life, must be more than a set of ideas and a discipline for actions: it must rally the emotions and make use of their great driving force. It happens that our emotions can be appealed to by images, and hence the desirability of forming as

concrete an image as possible of what the classical man, man *par excellence,* is like. In his *Prologue to an Essay on Criticism,* Maurras has said: "Good taste is the taste of the perfect man." He then goes on:

"There is such a thing as a perfect man. I mean that it is not difficult to conceive a man who should fulfil exactly the idea of our common condition and who could serve as a model for all of us. I hope I shall be excused for not bestowing upon this fictitious creature (fictitious but true) the nickname of *Beau Idéal:* that name crops up whenever people want to talk German or abandon a subject in favor of a vague terminology. People who argue about the ideal do not mean by that the total of the characteristics that build up and complete a being, but, as they say in their jargon, something over and above. The perfect man fulfils the definition of man, the ideal man deforms it here and there; I hasten to add that in the ideal man excesses are balanced by defects, and extravagances by omissions.

"By the perfect man I do not mean a mediocre figure in which virtues and faults are balanced. I am thinking of the limit of human power. Monsters and prodigies do not exceed that limit, as is commonly said. They are very well within it, like the mediocrities. Man conceives nothing beyond that limit, beyond which live the gods.

"In a few words, man is a reasoning animal. This old definition seems to me the only satisfactory one. Neither morality, nor sociability, nor, to be sure, feeling is peculiar to man. He is distinguished only by reason; that is what distinguishes him, without separating him,

from the rest of creation. Created nature is completely represented in him. In his body which has weight, number and measure as have the metals, organization like the plants, sensibility and movement like the animals, and which thus appears as the achievement of our earth. His reason is incessantly nourished, sharpened, enlivened, illuminated by the tribute which the world pays him through these three channels. Reason, thus conditioned by the whole of nature, must develop the fulness of its energies in the exact measure in which that can work no ill to the perfect expansion of a flourishing body; reason pushed to the point of parching the animal would exhaust its own sources of being; as for the exclusive culture of the body, that would coarsen the soul and deprive it of reason. So the most subtle of the Athenians used to drain bowl after bowl of wine without confusing his brain, and would then reason like a god. His companions admired him all the more.

"To express the natural harmony of these two powers, we commonly use a very vicious figure of speech: we speak of 'equilibrium' as if the objects on the scale were equivalent! *Order* is what we should call this conformity of a being to all the elements of its fate.

"What should be the critical sense of a human being composed in such a way that his instincts, his impressions, his feelings, his passions, when brought to the highest point, are guided and ruled by an intellect more powerful, itself fortified, sustained and nourished by the abundance of nature? His animal ardors will never usurp the seat of control which belongs exclusively to judgment and

reason; but will reason abandon a nature which is too robust, in order to follow vain imaginations? No dessication, no flaccidity either; forms full and well-nerved; philosopher and on occasion even metaphysician, but rigorously; a sense of real and true poetry; infused with all human warmth, but firm and secure against it if need be: such is the general idea that is possible of the good taste of an accomplished man."

I do not say I regard the above as the best depiction of the perfect man to be encountered, but Maurras indubitably proceeds along the right lines, using his imagination to catch a glimpse of the universal and at the same time not sacrificing his own individuality. He has succeeded in visualizing a model with fair claims to normality, representativeness, soundness, for his own personal imitation or emulation. Note that the logic by which Maurras has made his conception is the logic of probability, commended so often in the New Humanist books, and not simply a flight into the improbable.

(c). Decorum. What a fate has befallen this noble word! It is, in my opinion, impossible for the New Humanist to raise it from its low estate. Babbitt has exposed the way in which in the eighteenth century it came to mean etiquette: as he well says, the Neo-Classical writers made the bad mistake of confusing the language of the nobility with the nobility of language. This blunder Wordsworth recoiled from in his advocacy and use of plain diction: the Romantics hated decorum because it had become a stiff and formal and external affair. But worse degradation awaited the word, and at the present

time in America it seems to mean, so far as I can judge from the writers who object to it, the "genteel" manners, the prudish code of behavior which it is the fashion to attribute to the past generation. As I think, the word is beyond rescue: it is drowned in its present debased associations. But is that an excuse for those whose profession it is to read critically to charge classical scholars like More and Babbitt with attaching merely a "genteel" significance to the term?

How could Babbitt, for instance, have made it plainer than he did in the next passage I shall quote that decorum for him does not mean empty formalism, or a mere veneer of manners, but is inward and to be understood in a large way? I resort to italics, for truly they seem necessary to combat our habitual associations with the word. "Whoever has succeeded in bridging the gap between the general percept and some particular emergency has to that extent achieved the fitting and the decorous. *Decorum is simply the law of measure in its more concrete aspects.* For every type of humanist decorum is, in Milton's phrase, the 'grand masterpiece to observe.' *Actually this observation may rest on deep insight,* as it did in the case of Milton himself, or it may degenerate into empty formalism. The adjustment of which I have spoken between the variable and the permanent elements in human experience requires *spiritual* effort and most men are spiritually indolent. For genuine adjustment they tend to substitute outer conformity so that decorum itself finally comes to seem a mere veneer, something that has no deep root in things. Moreover the notions of decent behavior to which

men have conformed at any particular period have always been more or less local and relative. It is easy to take the next step and assume that they have been *only* local and relative, an assumption subversive not merely of decorum but of humanism itself."

But in spite of Babbitt's care in expressing his meaning, he has been constantly defeated by his readers' different sense of the term, and not even his using the phrase "a sense of proportion" as equivalent to decorum has enlightened most of them. Yet all that decorum means is the activity of our sense of proportion: it means the carrying out of what it is seemly for a man to do. It is not seemly for a man to whine, we say: not seemly for him to shirk the offices of the mind: not seemly to be an utter fool in practical affairs. Notions of fitting behavior vary from place to place and time to time, as Babbitt observes, but above all the varying notions there remains a permanent sense of how it is appropriate for a man to live. He should face the facts: he should put away childish things: he should deal with the difficulties of existence intelligently, courageously, forcefully: he should realize his innermost being. The indecorous is simply the inappropriate, the disproportioned, whether it occurs in art or in conduct. Bathos is indecorous: sentimentality, the gush of emotion far in excess of the fact, is indecorous: the intrusion of the purely private into public discussion is indecorous. The things named are either inappropriate or unmeasured.

To close the subject: Decorum, or a sense of proportion, is simply the law of measure in its more concrete aspects,

it is the law of measure in actual operation in the shifting tangle of daily existence.

In describing the discipline worked out by the New Humanists I have striven for extreme simplicity of statement. My aim has been to concretize as much as possible the technical formulations in Humanist literature. I was moved to do this, because I have sometimes read that the More-Babbitt doctrine and discipline are academic in the bad sense of the word. Babbitt and More advocate, it is said, notions that are narrow and have a freezing effect on the "spirit." They are, most damning accusation, puritanical. But what, when correctly understood, is evilly academic about their conception of man and the means they advocate for true self-fulfilment? What is narrow about their ideas when they are distinguished at the source and not "interpreted" by some overworked journalist? How can the law of measure possibly freeze up the springs of personality, if one has any personality to begin with? And are they puritanical? I cite Babbitt's critical position toward Puritanism for a sufficient reply.

"The crucial point in any case is one's attitude toward the principle of control. Those who stand for this principle in any form or degree are dismissed by the emancipated as reactionaries or, still graver reproach, as Puritans. Mr. Mencken would have us believe that the historical Puritan was not even sincere in his moral rigorism, but was given to 'lamentable transactions with loose women and fiery jugs.' This may serve as a sample of the

assertions, picturesquely indiscriminate, by which a writer wins immediate notoriety at the expense of his permanent reputation. The facts about the Puritan happen to be complex and need to be dealt with very Socratically. It has been affirmed that the point of view of the Puritan was Stoical rather than truly Christian, and the affirmation is not wholly false. The present discussion of the relationship between Puritanism and the rise of capitalism with its glorification of the acquisitive life also has its justification. It is likewise a fact that the Puritan was from the outset unduly concerned with reforming others as well as himself, and this trait relates him to the humanitarian meddler or 'wowser' of the present day, who is Mr. Mencken's pet aversion.

"Yet it remains true that awe and reverence and humility are Christian virtues and that there was some survival of these virtues in the Puritan. For a representative Puritan like Jonathan Edwards they were inseparable from the illumination of grace, from what he terms 'a divine and supernatural light.' In the passage from the love and fear of God of an Edwards to the love and service of man professed by the humanitarian, something has plainly dropped out, something that is very near the center. What has tended to disappear is the inner life with the special type of control it imposes. With the decline of this inner control there has been an increasing resort to outer control. Instead of the genuine Puritan we then have the humanitarian legalist who passes innumerable laws for the control of people who refuse to control themselves. The activity of our uplifters is scarcely sug-

gestive of any 'divine and supernatural light.' Here is a discrimination of the first importance that has been obscured by the muddy thinking of our half-baked intelligentsia. One is thus kept from perceiving the real problem, which is to retain the inner life, even though one refuse to accept the theological nightmare with which the Puritan associated it. More is involved in the failure to solve this problem than the Puritan tradition. It is the failure of our contemporary life in general. Yet, unless some solution is reached by a full and free exercise of the critical spirit, one remains a mere modernist and not a thoroughgoing and complete modern; for the modern spirit and the critical spirit are in their essence one."

To me it is a jest at the expense of the last decade that while so many of us have been marching behind the drums of Menckenism, round and round the same old circle of naturalistic ideas, there has issued forth from the despised quarter of university thought the most truly modern system of all, a system far more in accord with the spirit of Goethe, who spoke, says Babbitt, not as a Puritan but as a clear-eyed man of the world, than all the humanitarian and romantic panaceas that are so solemnly discussed in our liberal weeklies. Goethe said that everything that liberates the spirit without a corresponding growth in self-mastery is pernicious.

As a matter of fact, the New Humanist like the historical Humanist revolts against Calvinism. But he has hit upon an interesting substitution for the Christian

dogma of Original Sin or Depravity. Most attempts men have made at an objective critique of the human race have wound up in the conclusion that there is something radically wrong with it, that there is a Moby Dick loose in the ocean of humanity which must be hunted down and captured before the race can achieve peace. It is as though we all existed under some curse, as though we had been cheated of some birthright. Take the opening pages of *Walden*. Thoreau is trying for an objective view of mankind. He finds fault after fault sweeping through the race. He finds it indeed a very odd race, doing penance in a thousand singular ways for existence. Why is it thus? He is led to make one master indictment of human beings:—they are torpid! The humanistic view almost coincides, it amounts to saying the main trouble with mankind is torpor. Original Indolence in place of Original Sin! The criticism is reinforced by Buddhistic teachings. For the doctrine of original depravity to Babbitt is not thoroughly acceptable: it rests on rather metaphysical grounds and seems hard to verify practically. The Buddhist doctrine of the original laziness of human nature, however, appears to come closer to the ascertainable facts. "The greatest of vices according to Buddha is the lazy yielding to the impulses of temperament (*pamāda*); the greatest virtue (*appamāda*) is the opposite of this, the awakening from the sloth and lethargy of the senses, the constant exercise of the active will." By this stroke Babbitt once again frees his doctrine of theology, and as always makes his appeal to verifiable experience. The New Humanism, to offer still another

definition, is a warfare on man's original indolence. We may be said to be born with a "won't": the Humanist tries to oppose a "will" to this "won't."

What the New Humanism has to say about the Will is another borrowing from Eastern philosophy. The Will is regarded as anterior and superior to the Intellect: to it and not to the Intellect as in St. Thomas Aquinas is given the primacy. But you will find all this treated exhaustively in the works of Babbitt, More and their followers.

What I wish to say is that the problem of the Will is the very crux-problem of all our civilization. I am convinced that Babbitt has put the supreme question to our times, and that all debate over American Humanism is beside the main point until that question is fully faced. "Here at all events is the issue on which all other issues finally hinge; for until the question of moral freedom—the question whether man is a responsible agent or only the plaything of his impulses and impressions—is decided, nothing is decided; and to decide the question under existing circumstances calls for the keenest critical discrimination."

But how uncritical and impractical we are about this problem! Vague and futile! If anything is plain, it is that the Will presents first a psychological problem and only after that a metaphysical question. But we argue and theorize endlessly about the Will. Hardly ever do we think of a practical self-demonstration, and if we do it is some such ineffably silly demonstration as saying, "I *will* to open this window." But did you will to move all the muscles that shifted when you did so, including the

numerous unnecessary movements that accompanied the action? The truth is that Will can only begin where Behaviorism leaves off, but very few have digested Behaviorism. Why do we not howl with laughter when we read in William James: "My first act of free will shall be to believe in free will"? Or take this piece of naïveté upon which my eye has fallen while writing this chapter. A young critic is telling his audience that "the philosophic implications of the quantum theory, the writings of Whitehead, Eddington, C. J. Herrick and Millikan, and the spectacle of American artists recovering from paralysis of the will, had all combined to revive a sense of free will in certain Americans." It may be a sense of free will, but if it was arrived at by these means, by reading, we may be positive that it is an illusory sense. As if the same critic had listed a number of authors who had proved to him that he had what he was not previously sure of, a mind. We say we have minds because they demonstrate themselves to us beyond any possible doubt. If we indeed have Wills, they also will be self-demonstrating: no one need prove to us we have what we cannot doubt we possess. Where there is doubt, there is no Will. Where there is no doubt, let it be added at once there still may be no Will.

One thing we know: Will is not to be associated, as is often done, with desire. Our desires come and go and fight among themselves: we commonly act, not on *a* desire, but on the resultant of our various contending desires. But Will, in the very nature of the case, is distinct from and independent of desire. Not in the region of

desires but of efforts should we look for the roots of Will. On this the New Humanist is absolutely clear-headed.

And perhaps there we had better leave the discussion for the present. Making effort is always unmistakable to us. It has a psychological taste, if I may say so, so strong that we cannot delude ourselves into thinking we are not engaged in effort. Our desires on the other hand have quite another taste, and many times as is well known we are only dimly conscious of them. The use of Will then could never be unconscious, could never be a mere matter of believing theories. Will would make itself felt in the psychological realm as indubitably as our bodies feel kinæsthetic strain in hauling a heavy boat up on shore.

Everything in American Humanism depends ultimately upon the Will as an undeniable fact, not as an assumption. We may start with the assumption but unless we can convert it into a fact for ourselves as patent as the fingers on our hands we are playing with an illusion.

There is a practical problem of the Will: a practical approach to it: and perhaps a practical solution. The New Humanists project this key problem to the place where it belongs: in the front of all our dilemmas and puzzles as to how to lead "the good life." Should we all try seriously to work at the key problem, there would occur in American life a revolution that would be unimaginable.

The New Humanist not only associates Will with effort, but—what is a great advance over his opponents' mud-

dled notions about Will—with a particular type of effort: work on oneself, a work that takes the form of knowing oneself, harmonizing oneself, disciplining oneself. And in this lies the secret of the devotees of Humanism. It is, however, an open secret, older than Aristotle and still advertised today. It is that happiness comes not from psychological inertia but from psychological work. Once again I shall quote from Babbitt: "this sluggishness and slackness of spirit, this mere drifting and abdication of will, may, as Chaucer's parson suggests, be the crime against the Holy Ghost itself." The agreement is with Aristotle who conceived "of happiness in terms of work. All types of temperamentalists are from the human point of view passive. The happiness that they crave is a passive happiness. A man may pursue power with the energy of a Napoleon and yet remain ethically passive. He may expand his sympathies until, like Schiller, he is ready to 'bestow a kiss upon the whole world,' and yet remain ethically passive. A man ceases to be ethically passive only when he begins to work in the Aristotelian sense, that is when he begins to put the brake on temperament and impulse, and in the same degree he tends to become ethically efficient."

And now let one of the ancients, "the subtlest of the Athenians," the hero of the Platonic Dialogues, have the final word. "The best man is he who most tries to perfect himself, and the happiest man is he who most feels that he *is* perfecting himself."

The reader may think it strange that such a doctrine and discipline as we have been sketching should arouse the violent and oftentimes abusive antagonism that flared up in the winter and spring of 1930. Whatever its ultimate deficiencies may be, the New Humanism wears commonsense on its face, and its thought is both broad and elevated. Nevertheless it provoked a storm.

It is explicable. In the first place, much random opposition to American Humanism springs up because of the specific attitudes Humanists take in respect to art, literature, science, education, politics, and so forth. Stemming from the parent attitude of responsibility toward the natural self are a variety of consequential attitudes when the Humanist looks out upon the world around him. And it is these consequential (or possibly only contingent) attitudes which have caused some individuals to hurl their thunderbolts. An admirer of the cumbersome novels of Theodore Dreiser, let us say, reads some detached article by a New Humanist in which his hero is held up as an exemplar of "romanticism going on all fours": he inquires no further into the basis of American Humanism but immediately rushes to the defence of Dreiser and current American literature. And so with the advocate of Professor John Dewey's educational ideas. A criticism by a Humanist of these ideas is sufficient to incur the hostility of the disciple of Dewey: the system of the attacker on Dewey is of no moment, for his ideas on education are objectionable and so must be his whole outlook. There have been many such quarrels over specific opinions, which have naturally led to a condemnation

without examination of Humanism itself. The New Humanists work out their critique of modern life on many fronts. They advance a new-old program on the same number of fronts. It is easy to see then how, being comprehensive, they manage to stir up so many enemies. In the next three chapters I shall examine the Humanist attitude toward modern science, educational impressionism, and politics, and no doubt the reader will then easily comprehend why the New Humanism has provoked so much heated debate.

But in the second place there is a far more important reason why the reception of Humanism has been acrimonious beyond any precedent in American literary history. *It is because American Humanism dares to question the unconscious assumptions of our age.* It is well known that if you touch a man in his pocketbook, you frequently get a sudden dramatic agitated revelation of his psychology. Or touch a person in his sex life, and again there is the parting of the customary veils over his behavior: you see vividly the flashing of the person's psychological forces. There is a third way: instead of asking for a loan of money, or tossing a rabelaisian joke at an acquaintance, toss an idea at him that goes beneath his customary thoughts to strike at his latent assumptions, the thoughts he was unaware of, upon which, nevertheless, all his opinions come to rest. *Then* he will become active: he jumps as if a hypodermic needle had been applied to his mind: he bristles with defences against this idea that has irritated his mind at its very base.

You are attacking the context of things he did not know

he believed, but instinctively he knows now that if they are threatened, all his opinions are threatened. For it is *through* these unconscious assumptions that he has seen everything else. No wonder he rallies to their defence! No wonder he strikes back! It is the very quick of his mind you have touched.

American Humanism is a concerted assault not so much on what our age has assumed knowingly but on what it has unconsciously assumed. That is why it has been and will be violently opposed, fought with every weapon, shouted at and shouted down, if possible. The outcome may be within a decade the complete submergence of the Humanist movement. In that event so much the worse for an age that cannot be brought to criticize its unknown postulates once the light has been let in on them.

VIII

SCIENCE AND THE MODERN MAN

> *"Science has its legitimate pretensions to power; but false claims are now being advanced on all sides under the shelter of its name, and it is these false claims which the humanist is concerned to expose."*—Louis Trenchard More in *Humanism and America.*

Do you wish a vivid proof that American Humanism probes through the crystallized portions of the modern mentality and wounds its quick nervous base? Then consider the intense annoyance created among so many modernists by the temperate criticism the classical party makes of the current prestige of science. The New Humanist attempts only to moderate the very great esteem of our time for science. Yet pained outcries on every hand greet this effort at moderation, and this extreme sensitivity of many holding no stake in the matter to a criticism of the large claims made in the name of modern science surely calls for investigation. This conclusion cannot be escaped:—the men of our age are nowhere near so emancipated from Authority as they like to fancy.

It is true we no longer acknowledge Authority in the theological quarter. To accept on faith the cosmology of the Bible is to be mediæval. But are we the self-conscious rebels we picture ourselves? In revolting from the

theological fold, have we not rebelled on command of another Authority? However we came to revolt, now the situation is plain. We have merely transferred the seat of Authority, planting it today in the scientific quarter. Ye have conquered, O Galileans! To be modernistic is to be as subservient to the oracular opinions of scientific savants as the ordinary mediæval man was to the interpretations of his theologians. The boastful modernists are, in fact, still looking up to something far above: they are still on their knees before Authority as the bulk of mankind has always knelt.

What we take on authority is by definition what we cannot scrutinize or have not troubled to scrutinize, and of course we must be uncritical about the uninspected. Here, in the region of the authoritative, is where *aberglaube,* extra-belief, has a chance to enter; here is where we become superstitious. The New Humanist has never attacked exact science in itself, and in some respects his critique of what seem to him the mistaken pretensions of science is very mild. But he does pierce the *aberglaube* that in the nineteenth century attached itself to modern science. He is the foe of those who are gullible about science, who take it altogether on faith, who are, in short, superstitious. The language is not too strong.

There is a very quick way to test the tenacious hold that scientific authority exerts on us. (To repeat myself, I mean to test the existence of what to us are pure assumptions which have been implanted in us almost without our knowledge by contemporary science.) The quick way is to read two extraordinary and weird books of recent years,

The Book of the Damned and *New Lands,* both by an investigator of phenomena which have been excluded by orthodox science, Charles Fort. The author of these strange documents is acutely aware of the very human tendency of scientific system-makers to achieve a harmony of knowledge by excluding the inharmonious data. He has therefore turned his attention to the "disregards" of the scientists (geographers, geologists, astronomers, physicists, etc.), and comes forward as the champion of the damned data—and some of the data is horrendous. A daring writer, for he is obliged to challenge the correctness of many elementary things we learned in grammar and secondary schools. He adduces evidence, that is to say, totally at variance with what we were taught in school, when we were most submissive, and which we have *never* questioned. The result is that in reading Fort we experience a most peculiar sense of strain. We find that we *hate* to have any one argue with a show of good reasons that interstellar distances are rather small when we have always been told and believed, most of us without any detailed proof, that they were inconceivably immense. There are certain things—many items in fact—about the world which we want to regard as having been settled and learned once for all. The idea of new learning is attractive, but the idea of re-learning in fields where we have assumed certain things to have been thoroughly proven is most repugnant.

Among his provisional theories or "acceptances" as he calls them, Fort holds "that we do not really think at all; that we correlate around super-magnets that I call Domi-

nants—a Spiritual Dominant in one age, and responsively to it up spring monasteries, and the stake and the cross are its symbols: a Materialist Dominant, and up spring laboratories, and microscopes and telescopes and crucibles are its ikons—that we're nothing but iron filings relatively to a succession of magnets that displace preceding magnets."

To use Fort's terminology, the New Humanist recognizes that science is the Dominant of our civilization, and that most people, impressed by its marvels in the field of mechanical inventions, simply correlate around it. He invites us therefore to *think* about this super-magnet, to mark out its true sphere of influence, and to be conscious of our relation to it. He urges us, in brief, to be as critical of its magnetism as we are now able to be of the theological Dominant of former ages.

The first step is to discriminate between real science and what the French call *petite science* and we call popular science. The latter is often out-of-date, frequently over-simplified, and usually boastful. Yet it is what the average man, and many literary men with him, browses upon. In contrast, the scientific leaders are as a rule models of caution and modesty. The next step is to perceive that there is a hierarchy of sciences. It is to see with A. S. Eddington "that physical science comes nearest to that complete system of exact knowledge which all sciences have before them as an ideal. Some fall far short of it. The physicist who inveighs against the lack of coherence and the indefiniteness of theological theories, will probably speak not much less harshly of

the theories of biology and psychology. They also fail to come up to his standard of methodology." But it is notorious that the prestige rightly won by the most perfected sciences diffuses itself, in the eyes of the layman, over the newer and half-baked sciences, such as sociology, anthropology, and various schools of psychology, precisely those branches of science or pseudo-science which the literary are most attracted by the while they shirk the hard labor involved in getting a real acquaintance with physics. Thus the New Humanist turns out to be actually in accord with the strictest scientific attitude in his refusal to attend with the same degree of seriousness to, let us say, a "science of history" as that with which he attends to the science of chemistry.

There is a third step, and once it is really accomplished, one is released from either sentimentality or superstition about the scientist. Ridiculously simple, yet it is hard to make. It consists in realizing the subjectivity of men of science. Just as in a complex way, the style is the man, so in a complicated way science is also the man. The scientist has elaborated a method and perfected his instruments to eliminate the "personal equation," but it is nevertheless still present to haunt everything he does, to color his interpretations, to set the patterns for his theories. Science is not the voice of God but a distinctly human product with human limitations. Science may today be on a higher imaginative level, as A. N. Whitehead believes, but mark that Whitehead says this is "not because we have finer imagination, but because we have better instruments."

After a sincere effort to understand sympathetically the anti-Humanist viewpoint, it is still hard to see why such violent objection by intelligent liberals should be taken to the general position adopted by Humanism toward modern science. To sum up that position:—the New Humanists differentiate between true science and *petite science,* they draw attention to the differing degrees of development and stability in the various sciences, they dwell on the imperfection of the man who is using perfect instruments and a perfect method. It can only be that the modernists are in no mood whatever for skepticism when it is exercised toward their Authority.

We would expect, however, American Humanists to touch modern science far more closely than the foregoing sketch of a general attitude necessitates, and in fact they do. They take up particular attitudes: they debate details of the scientific dogmas: they subscribe or tend to subscribe to a given theory of the world. In their detailed criticism of science, they suggest a number of questions that so far as I know have not heretofore been raised about the New Humanism. The New Humanism, we have seen, is a philosophy of conduct. The New Humanists—note that I am discriminating between the philosophy of conduct and the persons who enunciate it—adopt a theory of the world. In the first place, is the theory of the world usually held by the New Humanist the direct and necessary outcome of his philosophy of conduct? Granting the truth of his theory of psychology, does that theory require a cosmology to go with it,

and is the cosmology of the majority of the New Humanists in strict correspondence? We have examined the picture of himself which the New Humanist declares is fundamental to the "good life." But is the picture of the world he holds before him also fundamental? What I wish to determine is whether the series of attitudes toward himself, the world, and the affairs of the world which we attribute to the New Humanist is seamless or whether we can with a sharp critical knife shear the attitudes apart where they join each other and say of any one of the specific attitudes, this is not essential or an alternative attitude would be just as logical in place of this one. Can we have Newtonian Humanists and Einsteinian Humanists?

Basically, the New Humanist endeavors to be an artist of life. He strives to become acquainted with his medium, the shifting texture and stuffs of daily experience. He wishes like every other artist to dominate his material, which means, in the chaotic field he has had the noble audacity to choose, self-conquest. It is necessary for him to dramatize his work as the struggle of two selves, the ordinary self being the recalcitrant material and the human self being the artist. Finally, like other artists he requires a technique for moulding his subject matter, and he advocates as the technique the employment of mediation. All this is practical psychology, and stands secure against any theoretical psychology now before the general public. For the New Humanist can say that whatever the ultimate mystery of human nature is, however the two selves may be attached to each other and reconciled,

whatever the secret unification of man may be, you cannot get around the fact that he is dualistic in practice. He can develop himself on one assumption, and one only, and that is the assumption of dualism. This is a hard stubborn fact of experience against which the Humanist makes his mind collide, just as Dr. Johnson kicked another hard stubborn fact of experience, a stone, to terminate a discussion of Berkeley's idealism. *Why* this should be so, *why* man should indubitably be in essence a struggle, the Humanist cannot say, but no more can he doubt that it is so whenever he makes the attempt to win moral freedom. There it is, in the path of his wish for freedom, and he must accept it as being *practically* true.

Undeniably—though it is seldom commented upon—the dualistic picture of man has great emotive power. Our emotions are swayed by images, a truism as old as ancient India, as new as Christian Science and Coué. It is not the whole story, but in a large measure emotions do respond to pictures. The time-worn illustration is the coil of rope in the road which one takes to be a snake. One's emotions form themselves accordingly, but on discovery that the supposed snake is only a coiled rope they change at once. So a person with a Rousseauistic image of man feels according to that image: his emotions drag against any effort to rouse himself from Arcadian dreams. The Humanist with his picture of a best self conferring style and order on an impressionistic protean self rallies his emotions to give their impulsion and sanction to the end in view: the achievement of normality. A creative conception of man calls forth creative emotions.

Now is there incorporated in American Humanism a clear-cut creative conception of the world? Is the world condensed into an image that is as powerful in its effects as the image of the two selves, as irrefutable on the practical plane, as inspiring to human effort? I do not find one, and this I take to be a serious shortcoming in American Humanism as a philosophy of conduct. But in my judgment the defect can with relative ease be remedied, and remedied in a manner most congenial to a philosopher of conduct so Greek as the American Humanist in his self-attitude. The reader ought to remember what was said in the chapter, *A Portrait of Our Age,* about the various life-pictures, the "æsthetic," the "puritan," the "serious," et cetera, current among us, and to recall the unlucky G. R. who had his imagination of life altered from the "Victorian" to the "scientific" imagination. None of those attitudes mentioned will do for the American Humanist, but why should he not find, being gymnastic in his relations with his ordinary self, aiming as he does to develop strength of character by exercises in mediation and selection, that the external world is best figured as a gymnasium? A vast enlargement of the ancient Lyceum which existed for the exercise of the mind as well as the body? Why should not the present-day Humanist revive this Greek symbol as he revives the Greek law of measure? Let us utilize again the practical psychologist whom we quoted in the earlier discussion of world-attitudes.

"There can be little doubt that for most of us, in the present epoch, the image of life as a gymnasium is a

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greatly needed tonic. Compare the difference in your attitude (emotional response) on entering a gymnasium and on entering, let us say, a cabaret or a Y.M.C.A. lecture-hall or a house of mourning. Try to realize what and how you actually feel. You are braced up, you have the intention of strengthening yourself, you delight in the difficulties,—provided you choose them yourself. In short, you feel at your strongest and getting stronger.

"The classic Greek conception of life was just that; and everybody knows that the gymnasium was the most popular institution of Pythagorean Greece. What is not so well known is that the gymnasium was for the Greeks a symbol or image of life itself. Their God ran this planet as a gymnasium for the exercise of men, and all experiences were to be taken as movements, turns, stretches, exercises, in wrestling, running, lifting, and so on. Moderns will find what the ancient Greeks found in the image of life,—the evocation of a creative emotion.

"It is difficult to see in what other direction we moderns can look for a new image and therefore attitude towards life. We have no longer the possibility of religion in the traditional sense. Ordinary goodness—in the sense of doing what others call good—has no intelligent appeal. And, after the still recent Great War, the belief in world progress is superstition. But the clean, strong idea of life as a field of exercise for the development of all our muscles—physical, emotional and intellectual—has still the unspoiled beauty of manly and womanly idealism. And life lived in that attitude would certainly be interesting as well as profitable.

The above seems eminently fitted to be the humanistic attitude toward the world. It involves no theology, no metaphysics, no science, being a matter of personal psychology alone. It presupposes, of course, that man can act as well as be acted upon, the first contention of the Humanist, and it reinforces his wish to act. It definitely humanizes the external world, making it a field for human beings to follow their end of self-perfecting, but it does not sentimentalize or minimize the world. It is, in fine, a tenable world-picture coöperating with the main aim of Humanism. But it is not a theory of the world. That is still to seek.

It is not far off. The theory of the world that has been joined on to the humanistic theory of the self is Cartesian: at least so far as one can determine from the commitments of the majority of the New Humanists, it is Cartesian. They are not, as a rule, any more precise than other literary men in what they say about their beliefs concerning the nature of the physical world, but any one can hear that they sing in chorus against the "New Physics." They resist the thought of A. N. Whitehead, A. S. Eddington, Albert Einstein, and re-affirm their confidence in something like the following:—"Unless it can be indisputably proved that man, with his infinite variety of thoughts and emotions, is but an aggregation of mechanical atoms held together and moved by physical forces—an hypothesis for which there is not the slightest proof—there seems to be no necessity to deny the existence of a spiritual world not subject to the laws of mechanical energy or circumscribed by the space limitations of material or electrical sub-

stances." This means that on the one side they as a practically united body reject deterministic psychology (Behaviorism, for example) and on the other side they hand over the inorganic world to science, concentrating on the faith that there are in the living organism elements not analyzable or accountable by science. The quotation was from *The Dogma of Evolution* by Louis Trenchard More, the brother of Paul Elmer More, and Dean of the Graduate School at the University of Cincinnati. Here is another from the same source to which the New Humanists would subscribe.

"It is no casual separation of our ideas into the physical, biological, and psychological realms. The physical world is a combination of substances acting according to a certain set of laws of force and energy, the biological world is composed of the same substances, but the laws of action are not the same. They have, however, this great principle in common; they, both, are limited by time and space. Then, somehow to the biological world an added principle is given that we can call consciousness which is not material but is associated with matter and which is not limited by time and space. To the present time, at least, these three realms are to us incommensurable and we have made no progress in measuring or explaining one by the other."

Louis T. More is the scientist among the New Humanists, a thorny fact to those who are trying to create the legend that the New Humanists are anti-scientific. The legend is punctured by this physicist, who has read and thought widely outside his subject; especially he has

browsed in the subject of philosophy, which is generally eschewed by the rank-and-file scientists. The result of this wandering is that L. T. More has equipped himself to disassociate scientific evidence from the faith that twines so tightly around it: he is an able, diligent critic, for example, of evolution as science and as faith. Considering him therefore as the most conscious author among the New Humanists when it comes to formulating a world-theory, let us look at his essay, *The Pretensions of Science* in the symposium, *Humanism and America.* You will find him very restrictive. To begin with, "science has a legitimate field of its own when investigating the phenomena of the objective world and attempting to find law and order in the flux of events." But there are two classes of false claims made for science, one by "those men of science who are not content to work in their limited field, but are really metaphysicians who have created a fictitious world of the imagination made out of ethers, electrons, and mathematical symbols, and have confused it in their own and others' minds with the sensible world of brute fact," and the other by "those who are claiming that the phenomena of the subjective world also lie in the field of science and have imposed on the age the pseudo-sciences of psychology and sociology." This is nakedly Cartesian, for as Whitehead shows so clearly, the principles of Descartes "lead straight to the materialistic, mechanistic nature surveyed by cogitating minds. After the close of the seventeenth century, science took charge of the materialistic nature, and philosophy took charge of the cogitating minds."

Let us pursue along these two lines and learn what further L. T. More has to say of the objective world and the "cogitating mind." On the first track, we read that "the cosmogony of Descartes has long since crumbled to dust, but the gap he made between the subjective and objective worlds has never been closed in spite of incessant later attempts . . . we have more and more regarded the universe as a machine, a combination of inert matter and moving forces, acting not as we may desire, but according to invariable laws which we have personified as Nature. Man was left, by the physicists, as a unique outsider who could interpret this machine in terms of his sensations and mind, but could neither alter nor avoid its fateful operation . . . the scientific method is limited to experimental observation and the formulation of laws . . . the inevitable tendency of science is to investigate all phenomena quantitatively, and to view the whole universe as a vast and measurable machine . . . exact science is first of all based on the naïve belief in an objective and real world whose events are connected in an orderly and prescribed manner, and occur independently of our thought or will . . . the mechanistic world can, at best, only picture an objective world as it seems to us, and not as it is."

Now following the second track, we read of "the two equally valid methods of learning by objective experimentation and by personal experience. . . . In a general way, we may say that the scientist should follow in his investigations the phenomena of the objective world only until their special forms of energy are absorbed by our nervous system. It is the province of the humanist to study the

phenomena of the subjective world after these stimuli have been translated into emotion and thought . . . the false pretensions of science must be wholly abandoned, and the problems of our destiny be examined by a wise judgment drawn from human experience, before we can hope for a sane and humanistic philosophy."

Here we can stop with some assurance that the main position toward which the New Humanists gravitate has been disclosed. Generally speaking, it is unfair to set forward any Humanist as an "official spokesman" and perhaps I should not have assigned L. T. More to that rôle. But his brother, P. E. More, and Robert Shafer have, I believe, been fertilized by his reflections on science, and I cannot detect in the writings of the other New Humanists any radical divergence from the Cartesian scheme. The question is, is the Cartesian world-picture integral to American Humanism or is it simply one of the possible views that might be adopted by American Humanists and held by them in common with members of various other schools of thought? Also, it is evident there are a number of difficulties which L. T. More's statements immediately raise, and which no doubt the reader feels should be dealt with. In the next section I shall put forward these difficulties myself and at the same time try to formulate what I think the modern man's attitude should be toward scientific world-building.

It seems to me that the truly modern man will first of all strive to free himself from the great spell cast by science in our epoch. He will try to overcome his own

suggestibility upon which propagandists for science from Huxley and Spencer to the present have played, so that he may answer himself frankly when he wonders if our hopes in science have not deceived us. Furthermore, as was earlier suggested, he will try to arrive at some conception of the external world which is not irrational, not violable by the teachings of science, and is at the same time dynamic and humanizing in its influence. This demand the world symbolized as a gymnasium, an immense Academy or Lyceum or Institute of Crotona, appears to meet perfectly. It makes no difference whether one adheres to a materialist or an organic or an idealistic philosophy: the world as a gymnasium for the strengthening of human fiber is a valid imagination under any of the three types of philosophy named. The question then becomes: picturing life as a gymnasium for the development of men, what values can be extracted from science by the man who does not propose to train himself to be a professional scientist?

Such a man, aiming at a general coördinated culture, must come to regard science in the same way he regards art and philosophy—with respect, but not sentimentally or superstitiously. No divinity surrounds any of the three: each subject is man-made and therefore fallible. But each is primarily to be enjoyed for its own sake. We accept this principle in art, not so fully in philosophy, and still less in science. Yet science provides a manipulation and stretching of mental muscles that is highly enjoyable for the sake of exercise alone. It provides adventures and perils of thought of a kind differing from philosophy and

art. A case should in fact be made out for science as a humane discipline, though I think of no one in America who is a shining example of such a discipline. I mean that we do not seem to produce men of the type of J. W. N. Sullivan in England, who are exquisitely cultivated both in the arts and sciences, who are supple-minded, adventurous in thought, thoroughly skeptical, at home with Einstein as with Beethoven or Dostoyevsky or Plato. We need cryingly more gifted amateurs among our laymen who study science and fewer intolerant "gospellers" of the type of Harry Elmer Barnes. I am reminded of some sagacious things about the *use* of philosophy for human beings which T. S. Eliot has recently written, because they apply equally well to the *use* of science.

"When we study philosophy as a humane discipline we do not do so merely in order to pick out one which we shall adopt as 'true,' or either to confect a philosophy of our own out of all philosophies. We do so largely for the exercise in assumption or entertaining ideas; for the enlargement and exercise of mind we get by trying to penetrate a man's thought and think it after him, and then passing out of that experience to another. Only by the exercise of understanding without believing, so far as that is possible, can we come in full consciousness to some point where we believe *and* understand." Eliot adds, "Similarly with the experience of poetry," and I would add, similarly with the experience of science.

The blunt truth is that the grounds of the attack on the New Humanists' statements about science have been mistaken. They were accused of hostility to the workings of

science. But they should have been accused of lukewarmness toward science as a humane discipline. Excepting L. T. More, P. E. More and Robert Shafer, the New Humanists may be said to lack zeal for that kind of development of their minds which science is most able to confer. Mildness of interest in a subject and active hostility to it are so different that not even blind partizanship would seem to be a sufficient excuse for identifying them.

But let not this argument for science as a humane discipline by which one flexes and enlarges the mind be construed as advocacy of dilettantism in the current debased sense of that word. The end in view is to become an alert critic of world-theories. And here I will say that I believe there is no essential connection between Humanism as a philosophy of conduct and the Cartesian materialistic theory of the universe. They are joined in the minds of the New Humanists, but that I think is a fortuitous juncture. Nor can I see that Humanism depends in any way soever upon a defence of Newtonian physics against later modifications and developments. The Christian cosmogony and cosmology constitute to most of us a mythology. The mythology may be profoundly true, more true than modern science, but we are in the position of not being able to verify its statements by an exact procedure. The means of individual verification may once have existed, but where are they now? We may assent to the Christian mythology, but it is assent based on faith, a very different thing from the *faith based on reason* of the great doctors of the Middle Ages. Add to this the fact that the materialistic, mechanistic world-view has been shaken by

the tremendous blows of mathematical physicists like A. N. Whitehead. It has got into the epicyclic state which presages a breakdown. Alternative world-schemes, imposing, daring, almost sublimely intuitive, are now being put forward. In other words, the problem of a world-theory has been reopened on a scale not dreamed of for centuries.

"The eighteenth century," observes Whitehead, "opened with the quiet confidence that at last nonsense had been got rid of. Today we are at the opposite pole of thought. Heaven knows what seeming nonsense may not tomorrow be demonstrated truth."

Now it appears to me that the New Humanists, by and large, retain something of the eighteenth century attitude in the face of the new physical problem. But a problem of this kind calls for the suspension of belief, for all the skepticism one can summon, for the complete willingness to run down any turning of thought, for the surprise attack, for an attitude best described as adventurous. The law for thing and the law for man, as they work out in human experience, do not depend on Cartesianism. At the present time, in fact, the law for man may be said to dictate the extrication of one's self from grooves of thought about the world: it lays an obligation upon one to be provisional in one's acceptances of world-theories: it requires that the problem be recognized and faced in the spirit appropriate to a mystery. Not to be a far-ranging agile critic of theories of the world is, in the twentieth century, not to be in key with one of its major trends in thought.

To illustrate the point, compare your feelings while traversing the familiar way home and while threading your route out of a labyrinth. The difference is like the difference between our take-it-for-granted psychology in handling a solved problem and our active searching psychology in moving about in a new problem. We are the same person but the intellectual environment has altered. It seems to me that most of the New Humanists have yet to adapt their psychology to the labyrinth of modern physics. Note, however, that I do not urge upon them any recommended way out: I do not ask them to adopt Eddington's world-theory but to tackle it in a different spirit.

For it may well be that this intense critical search for a tenable conscious world-view will not meet with complete success in our century. But not to make the search is not, in my judgment, to be humanistic, since the problem is the problem of any one who aspires toward completeness. The final personal reward of a maximum use of our critical powers on classical physics and the new physics is that we at least shall know with the utmost clarity what we believe and understand, and what we do not believe and find insoluble. That is, we shall be as conscious as we can possibly be of the nature of the external world, even if that consciousness consists but of alternative possibilities, doubts, queries and speculations, and perhaps a few certitudes.

There is another large fact to be grasped, toward which our psychology must make adjustment. It is that modern science is stranded on a "plateau" and its giants are

making their greatest efforts to raise it, to initiate a new curve of development. The analogy is with those curious graphs of learning processes, which show that one learns rapidly at first, then comes to a period of little or no progress ("a plateau"), then mounts again, arriving later at another "plateau," and so on. To get off a "plateau" a special effort, produced either by some external incentive such as the offer of a reward or by a renewed determination, is required. Now it has for some time been recognized by advanced minds that modern science was in just such a condition of arrest. It was able to refine upon what it had already done, but not able to initiate any great rising movement. There is material for novel reflections in the description Whitehead gives of the state of science at the end of the nineteenth century. "Almost suddenly, a pause occurred; and in its last twenty years the century closed with one of the dullest stages of thought since the time of the First Crusade. It was an echo of the eighteenth century, lacking Voltaire and the reckless grace of the French aristocrats. The period was efficient, dull and half-hearted." The cause? We may venture to say that it was because, as Whitehead elsewhere notes, science for two centuries had been running on the accumulated capital of ideas of the seventeenth century, "the century of genius." A pause, a blocking, was bound to come. And today science, as Whitehead and Eddington recognize, is at a crucial turning point. It seeks to discover the elements that will make for another period of development, and discovery of the necessary elements Whitehead tells us requires more genius than to exploit them when found.

Who can fail to be stirred by this tremendous drama of the human mind? And yet it appears that many are unmoved, anti-Humanists as well as Humanists. The scientist, going about his business, discovers that his personal limitations, the usual habits of scientists, are retarding the progress of science itself. Science properly is concerned with the what-ness of things. From the why-ness of things (philosophy) and the æsthetic and other emotional imports of things (values) it has resolutely cut itself off. It has, every one knows, discounted the intuitive, discounted other forms of knowledge. But now see: the scientist is discovering that his exclusive interest in *what* and his impatience with *why* and with value is ultimately stultifying. He feels the basic need to fertilize himself by considering other reports on reality than his own, he struggles to escape the bondage of his traditional habits. It is a situation that should call forth the full interest and sympathy of the humanistically inclined.

For what it emphasizes is the desperate need for a coördination of all our knowledges. A knowledge of "porous atoms" does not destroy our practical knowledge of a table, nor take away the table's æsthetic properties. The world exists as a source of ideas, of emotions, of actions; it is simultaneously a field of practical affairs, an object of feeling, an intellectual feast. Reality is threefold, but our reports upon reality seldom harmonize. The rationalist underrated two of these reports and trusted fully to one only. The scientist now shows a disposition to admit the validity of all three and to bring about a *rapprochement* of the practical, emotional and mental

worlds. A very faint glimmer still comes across the centuries, elusive witness to the grandeur of the Pythagorean synthesis. Who knows but what the twentieth century, treasuring the glimmer, may not succeed eventually in reflecting it back with an unexpected glory?

"Know thyself," said Pythagoras, and the recollection of that injunction points to our greatest stumbling-block. To me it is a little Canute-like of L. T. More to forbid to science the subjective world. And I say this with full awareness of the inadequacy and faultiness of introspection as a method. But if introspection is of little use to psychology as a science, it is equally of little use to Humanism. Is it impossible, however, that a better method cannot be devised, is it impossible to put self-study on a scientific basis? The rise of Behaviorism is too impressive for any fiats to be delivered now against the further endeavors to found psychology on a really substantial basis. The Behaviorist has cleared the ground, he has come to the threshold, but it is a question of the key to the subjective world. I do not think the New Humanist need dread the search for the key.

IX

EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP

> *"Tradition is the experience of society. It is stored up for use by what may be called the objective memory. The chief function of education is to transfer the wealth of a selective tradition from society to the individual."*—Paul Elmer More in *The Drift of Romanticism: Shelburne Essays, Eighth Series.*

Insufficient attention has been paid by intelligent unacademic people to the educational ideas and constructive suggestions for academic reform offered by the New Humanists. Only one commentator in the flurry of debate that ensued on the issuance of *Humanism and America* wrote with gratitude of the salutary effect on literary scholarship produced by the unremitting efforts of American Humanists, and he was Henry Seidel Canby, who has known at first hand the *literae inhumaniores* that flourish rankly in our universities. Nowhere better, it seems to me, than in their dissertations on the teaching of the humanities—nowhere better than in such books as Babbitt's *Literature and the American College* and Foerster's *The American Scholar*—can we witness the law of measure being applied to current problems. Moreover, if anything calls for the most tactful mediatory treatment, it is the tendencies and objectives of our colleges and universities.

It is right, I think, to regard American Humanism, when one refers to the *movement* rather than the doctrine and discipline, as being primarily an educational force. Many of its adherents are actively engaged in teaching and therefore the problems of education possess a personal urgency for them. They do not dream at present of marching on the literary citadels of the country and subduing their garrisons to standards they have foresworn, but the teacher-classicists definitely do propose to wrest education from the control of humanitarians. There, in the field of education, the New Humanist affirms "the battle that is to determine the fate of American civilization will be fought out first of all." For this reason I am giving a chapter to the members of the movement as educators rather than as literary critics. As literary critics, they consider the prevalent impressionism to be a low form of criticism and seek to restore criticism to its former acknowledged business, judgment by humane standards. But I feel no regret in neglecting in this book the numerous important ideas for contemporary literary critics which stud the works of Babbitt and More. With such writers as T. S. Eliot and F. McEachran in England, Robert Shafer and Seward Collins in America lifting them up and weighing them, they are certain of a distinguished attention. So my conscience does not trouble me because in the present interpretation only incidentally do I visit the purely literary front of the New Humanist campaign. The most serious fighting is on the educational front, and the enemy is educational impressionism.

We can divide the educational front into three sectors,—

the lower schools, the college, and the university with its graduate schools. On the first the New Humanists are not very active, on the second they take a very determined stand. If they can hold the college to its function, as they conceive it, they are willing to make concessions in the graduate schools. The leading ideas they put at stake in each sector are very easy to state. In the lower schools, where it is granted that the humanitarian tinge is not undesirable, the pupil should be acquisitive and receptive. In college the student should be assimilative and reflective. In the university the scholar may be productive, investigatory, original on the basis of his humane discipline in the college. Reception when young, assimilation in college years, productive research in graduate school—these are the functions that should underlie our educational system. But the college is being ground out between the encroachments of preparatory schools and the invasion of university ideals of research. And there is where the situation is most tense and critical. We shall begin, however, with the lower schools and the theory of John Dewey, arch-foe of American Humanism in education as well as in philosophy.

No one can be insensible to the value of Dewey's correction of certain evils in our public school system. He has perceived the dangers of too much abstractness in its curriculum, and the need for more education by doing. It is largely through his influence that the Project Method, as it is now called, the method of teaching by correlating school subjects around some social activity of the children,

around weaving, for example, has been given its present vogue. But it is the leading ideas of Dewey that are at issue, and not any desirable modification of the elementary school curriculum.

We live in a democratic society: therefore, say the disciples of Dewey, education should adapt itself to the needs and the condition of the many children, not of the few exceptional ones. We live in an industrial society: therefore education should be closely connected with the major actualities of an industrial society. Going to school is not "a preparation for life." It is experience as much as any other phase of life. The gap between life in school and life in the family and on the playground should be decreased as much as possible. In a sentence, education should be socialized. It should be thoroughly democratic. It should develop the virtue of coöperation to the highest degree.

To these guiding ideas every one must in some measure give assent, but many people feel that their limited assent must be combined with a great deal of criticism. Robert Shafer, for one, looking over the records of educational experiments along the lines mapped out by Dewey, has repeated the old proverb: one swallow does not make a summer. The experiments have been made with picked children and picked teachers. But, Shafer asks, can conclusions be drawn that will be valid for the educational system as a whole, since in the whole system the children are unpicked, the coöperation of the majority of parents cannot be secured, and the quality of the teachers must inevitably sink far below the standard of the experimental

school enthusiasts. Waiving every other consideration, are the new lower-school ideas feasible for a wide application? But presupposing practicality, those other waived considerations become the very important ones, and the New Humanist cannot satisfy his strong doubts of the ideals of the Dewey reform. Others, besides New Humanists, have come to experience like doubts, and some of these are persons who at one time were wholly convinced or almost convinced of the soundness of Dewey's proposals. One of them is a woman who, to my belief, is the most brilliant of all the contemporary pioneering spirits in the "new education." I mean Margaret Naumburg, the founder and for eight years (1914-1922) the director of the Walden School in New York city. In 1928 a book from her pen appeared, *The Child and the World,* a series of dialogues on modern education, in which she summed up the results of her thinking and experience in her special field. In spite of the author's reputation, the book was not, as a rule, thoroughly reviewed. One surmises that this was in part due to Miss Naumburg's having abandoned and criticized the positions so many other new educators were still clinging to. However it happened, the central point of the book was overlooked: very little attention was paid to the clash she staged between Dewey's program for socialized education and Whitehead's views on education which stress the encouragement of individual development.

Our immediate interest lies, of course, not in Miss Naumburg's partial advocacy of Whitehead, but in her critique of Dewey. Naturally, as who would not, she

speaks of Rousseau as the common ancestor of the new school movement in America, approving of his praise of learning by doing; to Rousseau she links Dewey as the immediate parent of present-day experiments. But Rousseau's general influence on the new school movement, she emphasizes, has had very unfortunate consequences. This is due to establishing so many experiments on "Rousseau's romantic hope that maladjusted human functions could right themselves by a return to the simple life of nature . . . the belief that we can right ourselves by simply removing certain limiting trammels of civilization." Miss Naumburg, her book makes clear, has shed all her illusions about so naïve a belief. Her counts against Dewey are four: (1) he underestimates emotional culture in his educational plans, (2) he has framed these plans too closely in accord with his own bias as a psychological type, being particularly unfair to the possibilities of the training of intuition, (3) he is too chary of the inner, the subjective life, and (4) his socialized education completely neglects individual psychology.

She holds up for close scrutiny a quotation from Dewey's *Democracy and Education* which the New Humanist would certainly agree is an amazing piece of sophistry. It is the concentration of all the arguments for socialized education. "From a social standpoint, dependence denotes a power rather than a weakness; it involves interdependence. There is always a danger that increased personal independence will decrease the social capacity of an individual. In making him more self-reliant it may make him more self-sufficient; it may lead to aloof-

ness and indifference. It often makes an individual so insensitive in his relations to others as to develop an illusion of being really able to stand and act alone—an unnamed form of insanity which is responsible for a large part of the remediable suffering of the world."

On this strange argument Miss Naumburg's comment is: "Much of the present social philosophy that wishes to sacrifice the individual to the good of the group is nothing but instinctive herd psychology, translated into modern terms. . . . I'm sure the world now needs more complete individuals so that group life can become integrated on a higher plane. Dewey places emphasis on the individual's living for the group rather than for himself and suggests that his failure to do so is the cause of much of the world's suffering. But to me it seems that the failure of the individual to know himself remains the cause of his ineffectual adaptation to a positive and adequate social existence."

This is pointed criticism from the inside of a movement whose advanced minds are now beginning to realize that they have envisaged their problems far too simply,—that self-expression is not the magic formula, that psychoanalysis produces as much trouble as it dissolves, that socialized education too much disregards the individual gifted pupil, that liberty is a hard concept to understand aright. The New Humanist on the outside phrases his criticism differently. It is that Dewey offers no contribution to the urgent problem of producing leaders of quality in a democratic society. For the New Humanist makes no fetich of democracy, as does Dewey, nor does

he stand for an unmixed aristocracy either. To him the social problem is the blending of the two, the securing of an aristocratic and selective democracy, and he would like to see education from the kindergarten upwards organized for the furtherance of that aim.

Dewey is a Baconian philosopher with an admixture of Rousseauism. I am here making use of the Babbittean classification of modern naturalists into two types, those prefigured by Francis Bacon who are known as scientific naturalists, and those prefigured by Rousseau and known as sentimental naturalists. The classification causes so much resentment among present-day intellectuals, it is so hotly repudiated, that I am led to wonder if Babbitt has not again probed to the bottom of our era's mind and located basic trends we have not known we were exemplifying. Certainly, his two types, however petty many of the exemplars today may be, are of epical stature. The drama of the last three centuries is no mean one, and requires as its leading characters personages to fit the scale of the action.

Of course, we must discriminate between Babbitt's estimates of Bacon and Rousseau as personages and his description of the types of men he names after them. In the character of Bacon, for instance, he notes the presence of traditional Christianity and Renascence humanistic elements. Babbitt does not, to my mind, allow sufficiently for the enigmatic in Bacon—hardly any one today is cautious enough for that—and he accounts for the Lord Chancellor's fall, which is still inexplicable when all is

said, on too general grounds. But, to get his types, Babbitt does not simplify either Bacon or Rousseau: he merely extracts from them the large formative elements which released into the world have created the Baconian and the Rousseauist. It is undeniable that Bacon was, in Whitehead's words, "one of the great builders who constructed the mind of the modern world." He was the prophet of the Kingdom of Man, Babbitt declares. He foresaw man's dominion over the earth, he made efficient the impulse to unlock Nature with the keys of Science, he stimulated men to the astounding utilitarian triumphs which the centuries since Bacon have achieved. It was his genius that made the idea of progress so potent.

The Baconians have gone forth and conquered the earth. If most of them lack the slightest touch of Bacon's dignity as a human being, they nevertheless partake of the majesty of numbers and are not unworthy of a mass-part in a planetary drama. But it has been a mass with notable leaders down to John Dewey in our day. The mass firmly believes in technological advance, material progress, the pragmatic life. For it the "law for thing" is supreme. The leaders subtilize and rationalize these beliefs.

The Baconians and Rousseauists are often superficially hostile to each other. We all know the contempt the scientific analyst frequently expresses for the dreamer, and in turn the dreamer's horror of the analyst. But Babbitt demonstrates that the two types are in close accord underneath. Both deny the "law for man." Both subscribe fervently to the doctrine of progress. And oftentimes in

the same person you will find prominent strains of both types, happy in each other's company.

It scarcely needs saying that the Rousseauist is in a much greater emotional ferment. The Baconian exalts practical intelligence, strenuous deeds accompanied by acute if narrow thought: the Rousseauist exalts sympathy, revery, spontaneity and liberty. His idea of liberty is summed up in the popular expression, "doing as one likes," which means, Matthew Arnold labored to show, doing as one's ordinary self likes. "Do what thou wilt," the injunction over the Abbey of Theleme, is a far sterner permission and closer to the true idea of liberty.

It is, I think it necessary to repeat, not claimed by the New Humanist that contemporary Baconians and Rousseauists have been directly influenced by the remarkable men they are named after. The actual matter is very complex, as you will see by recourse to Babbitt's books, but what is maintained is that unconsciously we breathe in the widespread gaseous elements of the teachings of Rousseau and Bacon and are profoundly modified in our entire outlook on civilization by the fact that they once lived.

In recent years the American college has been overrun by the Baconian scientific hustlers and by the Rousseauistic relaxed dilettantes—both menaces to humanistic education.

In college circles the Baconian is usually a specialist eager to advance learning in his branch of research but applying quantitative tests to his department and to the college in general. He is strenuous and imbued with the

spirit of change. When he invades the arts, he is scientific rather than artistic. To give a concrete example, in the literature department the Baconian is the philologist, engaged in original and minute research, but usually lacking in æsthetic appreciation or in general ideas. He is supposed to teach the humanities: he has prepared for his vocation by composing a dissertation on the use of the present participle in some minor Elizabethan.

His colleague in the literature department is often a Rousseauist, a gelatinous æsthete, incapable of hard mental labor, who utilizes literature only as an agreeable source of sensations and impressions. The philologist, taking his cue from Herbert Spencer, is inclined to think of purely literary studies as a form of play, a relaxation, after the exacting labors of scientific analysis: the æsthete-teacher confirms him in the notion.

Against these men in the colleges the New Humanist fights. He opposes the quantitative and dynamic standards the Baconian would introduce, and he scorns the shallow impressionism of the dilettante teacher. His program calls for the continued teaching of the classics and the intimate relating of the classics to modern life. He insists that literature in the colleges should be taught as a vital subject bearing in countless important ways on the formation of character.

Instances abound of the contrary feeling that the classics cannot hold much import for the forming of modern character, and as one instance is as good as another, I will take the most recent to come to my notice. "Shakespeare No Benefit to This Age" is the heading of a newspaper

column written by a former college professor, Harry Elmer Barnes, in which he declares that much might be said in support of the argument that "the beauty of Shakespeare's diction and the shrewdness of his analysis are more than offset by the influence he exerts in keeping alive ancient superstitions like witchcraft, ghost-walking, devil-lore and the like. In short, Shakespeare does more harm than good to the twentieth century intellect." It is grotesque narrow views of literature like this that the contemporary Humanist deplores in the ranks of teachers.

A succinct way of summing up the American Humanist's educational program is to say that he favors the imitation of French scholarship rather than German. The latter of course reigns in our universities, and in these octopus-institutions, but not in the colleges, the Humanist grants it plenty of room, for the university may well exist for the advancement of learning, even if it is only the digging up of a trivial fact concerning some Alexandrian grammarian. But on the whole, "might we not advisedly turn now to France, where, to be sure, the scientific study of literature has also had a marked influence, but where other traditions of scholarship have offered a resistance wholly wanting with us? French reflection, French lucidity, French finesse, French moderation, the French concern for humane assimilation, the French devotion to general ideas, the French insistence upon taste and style, the French interest in criticism—these qualities, all but absent from our own work, I take to be worthy of emulation." The words are from Norman Foerster's *The*

American Scholar, a lucid diagnosis of the ills of our literary scholarship:—its tendencies to be absorbed into linguistics, into history, into psychology, to become one of the lesser and dismal sciences.

By the way, the conditions analyzed by Foerster and the practical remedies he proposes at the end of his monograph ought to receive very thoughtful attention from the professional men of letters. The sufficient reason is contained in the following quotation: "Modern American scholarship is in a way to becoming a veritable Polyphemus, choicely nourished on human food yet endowed with one eye only. We must set about restoring the traditional alliance of scholarship and criticism, the divorce of which has worked injury to both and played havoc with education. It has made American scholarship narrowly mechanical and progressively tangential. It has encouraged an American criticism that can only be characterized as ignorant and aimlessly impressionistic, for the lamentable state of our critical journals is largely the consequence of academic failure to uphold the past as a school of judgment. And it has played a major rôle in the disintegration of American education, for it has made the study of the humanities scientific in an age already blinded with excess of scientific light, an age that is groping in vain for such other light as literature could shed if it were rightly studied."

But my purpose precludes entering upon the details of the New Humanist's criticism of college instruction or upon the concrete plans he presents for honors degrees and doctorate reforms. The broad idea is that the uni-

versity may exist for the advancement of learning, but the college should stand for the assimilation of learning and the perpetuation of culture. It should train for wisdom and character by the processes of assimilation and reflection. It needs teachers of quality—not linguistic Dryasdusts or quivering dilettanti. What is wanted, says the Humanist, is the teacher who has expended his originality (in our age it *is* originality) in grasping the "constant mind of man," who has disciplined himself on the best models of literature and formed from them a wise appreciation of the normal and representative, who has approximated to that type almost extinct in a civilization dominated by the Baconian specialist and the Rousseauistic thrill-monger, the *honnête homme qui ne se pique de rien.*

The full significance of the educational program of the American Humanists comes out best in a comparison of the policies advocated by Charles W. Eliot and Irving Babbitt. Eliot was President of Harvard University from 1869 to 1909. In that position he became famous as the father of the free-elective system, and until his death in 1926 ranked as America's most ardent crusader for educational reform. He was highly esteemed for his character, a late flowering of the Puritan tradition, and he was immensely influential through his theories which were not Puritan: the theories were derived from Rousseau and therefore at variance with the Puritan tradition in its most vigorous state.

It is ironical that teaching under President Eliot for

fourteen or fifteen years was his best weaponed and fearless critic, and that today this critic who condemned Eliot's theories and influence should be acknowledged as the greatest mind at Harvard. Yet it is the case that Babbitt with his great strength for rending fallacies apart matured to power within the very baliwick of President Eliot.

The first clash was over the free-elective system. Eliot with his trust in human nature had reasoned that each student had a pronounced bent, some special aptitude, some absorbing interest which he was eager to follow, and that this interest or bent or aptitude was thwarted by a fixed curriculum. He was also impressed by the half-truth which he took to be a whole truth, namely, every person is unique and the college should therefore give full play to his uniqueness. To this Babbitt replied in substance that there is quality in subjects as well as quality in teaching. The free-elective system tends to deny quality in subjects and makes higher education miscellaneous. And he replied further that men have constant elements coexisting with their variability, and that it was the constant in man, not the diverse and fluctuating, which education should reckon with.

Facts have refuted President Eliot's optimism about the free-elective system. It was found that students followed in choosing their courses not the line of their aptitudes, of which often they were unaware, but the line of least resistance. It was found that their uniquenesses were not so precious after all. The result was a partial retreat from the free-elective stand in favor of a compromise between

the old restricted curriculum and the new unlimited one.

But the issue comes to a clearer head when the formulæ of the champions of utilitarian-humanitarian education and of humanistic-religious education are put side by side. "Training for power and service," said President Eliot. Babbitt answered in words I have already used: "Training for wisdom and character." Obviously President Eliot's is a Bacon-Rousseau formula. How does it work? Power in our society means material efficiency, and service means, not the traditional service of God, but the service of man. The assumption is that "the material efficiency promoted by utilitarian effort will be used altruistically." But after the Great War this assumption looks tragically ludicrous.

These are the conventions established by the age President Eliot represented so faithfully: self-expression as a value (or falling in the direction one's character leans, an unfriendly critic might mutter), strenuousness (the pursuit of happiness by intense outer activity), the "religion of service" (nowadays satirized by the *American Mercury* and Sinclair Lewis as only a veneer for commercialism), and complete faith in the natural man (in religious language, the hope of salvation without conversion). These conventions Babbitt has wrenched to pieces in his analysis and now proposes a return to the old humanistic-religious conventions.

In so far as the movement called American Humanism has a definite program of action, this is it. First, that "a considerable number of persons get at least within hailing distance of one another as to the definition of the word

humanism itself and the nature of the discipline that this definition entails." Next, that they then proceed "in the literal sense of that unjustly discredited term, to work out a convention." And next, that they concern themselves with education. By setting up a convention is meant the thorough agreement among the members of a considerable group on certain fundamentals, the complete conviction of truth concerning certain underlying statements about life. The conventions that the New Humanists wish to reëstablish are: (1) that "happiness is a kind of working" (inner, not outer, working, according to Aristotle, who is here quoted), (2) that man needs to be disciplined in his natural self to some standard (that is, to undergo conversion or turning away from the natural self, such conversion to be accomplished in the Aristotelian way by the gradual formation from childhood of right habits), and (3) that education should culminate in the idea of leisure (also Aristotelian, since according to the New Humanist leisure is valuable for supplying a background of meditation to life).

Now I imagine that when the policy is thus reduced to essentials, many people will wonder why there is any opposition to American Humanism in the field of education. Yet the fact is that the principal forces in education move, blindly most of them, directly counter to the fundamental views of Humanism. It is an against-the-current struggle that the New Humanists undertake. They are fighting for quality of teaching in the humanities, and the current sweeps down upon them a horde of linguistic specialists. They are fighting for quality of

subjects, and the classical subjects are steadily being submerged. Finally, they are fighting for quality of students, and the colleges and universities in their competition for big enrollments flood them with quantities of the less fit for the intellectual life. For the New Humanist declares flatly that the college should exist for the intellectually best of each generation. Humanitarian coddling in the colleges he denounces as a danger to democracy, pointing out that in a quantitative age the college must make its great purpose to be the production of men of quality. In fine, the educational problem is closely associated with the problem of leadership, and the problem of leadership leads us straight into the subject of the next chapter—the political problems of a democracy.

X

HUMANISM, ECONOMICS, POLITICS

> *"We have the naked question to answer: How shall a society, newly shaking itself free from a disguised plutocratic régime, be guided to suffer the persuasion of a natural aristocracy which has none of the insignia of an old prescription to impose its authority? Shall the true justice prevail, which by a right discrimination would confer power and influence in accordance with inner distinction; or shall that so-called justice prevail—for no man acknowledges open injustice—which recommends itself as equality of opportunity, but in practice, by confusing the distinctions of age, sex, and character, comes at last to the brutal doctrine that might makes right, whether that might be the material strength of money or the jealous tyranny of numbers?"*—Paul Elmer More in *Aristocracy and Justice: Shelburne Essays, Ninth Series.*

The educational theories of the New Humanists, I think it must be granted, are thoroughly consonant with the premises of the New Humanism. Education, at least through the college, ought to be dominated by the spirit of conservation. In the university and afterwards, the spirit of change ought to have full opportunity, for by that time presumably the student is safeguarded against that mere "passage from nothing to nothing" which Whitehead tells us happens when there is "change without conservation." The college is the place for the assimilation of the traditional wisdom, which acts as a

check on the wisdom of any particular age. It is the place where today it is most disastrous not to temper liberty with restraint, and it seems to me that the New Humanist has most admirably mediated between pure restraint and pure liberty in his educational program. A contempt for antiquity, Tocqueville sagely remarked, is a chief danger of democracy, and for that reason the study of the classics has a special value in a democratic community—the New Humanist goes with Tocqueville and not with the contemporary poet who has shouted, "The past is a bucket of ashes."

But how is it with the excursions of the New Humanists into the disputed territory of economics and politics? Are their known views on these subjects the views that must inevitably be adopted if one accepts their primary teaching of a psychological dualism and a discipline based on the law of measure? Or are there several views which might with equal consistency be taken up? Or can we say that they are good Humanists but bad economists? The question has come up at least once before. Referring to historical Humanism, Frank Jewett Mather, Jr., has written, "We might say that the humanistic attitude was to seek a fine worldly wisdom through direct study of man in thought and action, such study being powerfully reënforced from those precedents of great living contained in the literature of Greece and Rome—a fresh research balanced and somewhat directed and measured by a great tradition. I can find no stricter formula that seems to fit the case. The attitude adumbrated above seems compatible with many other attitudes, indeed with almost any

attitude that is not dogmatic or fanatical, or life-denying. For example, today one might be an agnostic humanist, a Catholic humanist; a royalist humanist, a socialist humanist; a utilitarian humanist, an idealist humanist; conceivably a Mormon humanist or a liberal hard-shell Baptist humanist. That is, a quest of a fine worldly wisdom nurtured by tradition might in theory be compatible with any of these policies, philosophies or faiths. Nor does this divest the notion of humanism of any real meaning if the main thing be the attitude, for the humanistic attitude may be after all simply a leaven which is potent in the most various materials." In this statement the attitude of Humanism is pretty dilute for our exposition, but in any case the question of strictly relating attitude to views is effectively opened up for discussion. Perhaps Humanism as a creative conception of man does not dictate any one economic or political theory as its logical choice? Perhaps it is the *spirit* with which More and Babbitt have studied the problems of economics that is criticizable?

The obvious danger of the New Humanist when doubtful matters are debated is to drop into an acceptance of the status quo just because it is the status quo. He is proof against the temptation of the "radical" which is novelty for the sake of novelty, but it is easily possible that where an obdurate social problem exists, he may justify the status quo instead of wholeheartedly throwing himself *into* the problem. This in effect is what in the chapter on *Science and the Modern Man* I accused him of doing: it seems to me he adheres to the outmoded Cartesian world-view when he should instead plunge into the prob-

lem of reconstructing a world-view. And I am inclined to think that Paul Elmer More, whose views on property and law, aristocracy and justice I shall glance at before taking up Babbitt's political theory, has fallen into this error of identifying the status quo or commonly accepted position with a truly conservative solution. It is conceivable, I mean, that both the status quo of social organization and the current schemes for reforming it might be equally objectionable to a profoundly conservative mind.

More has not the type of mind that functions happily in economics and politics. His absorbing interest has been in Man Psychologic and he has had little traffic with Man Economic or Man Political. But the rise of Socialism in the United States and the Bull Moose Progressive movement challenged his mind around 1912, and in *Aristocracy and Justice,* the ninth volume of the *Shelburne Essays,* he answered, or rather defied, the new tendencies. By his conclusions in this volume on man as an economic and political animal, he probably incurred more hostility than any of his other books has provoked. For *Aristocracy and Justice* came out in 1915, the very time that the social revolt movement in the United States was fairly getting off the ground for a dizzy if brief flight: the dominant concerns of the generation of thinkers younger than More were precisely his subordinate concerns, economics and politics. Naturally, the new generation dropped bombs on *Aristocracy and Justice,* and with a ferocity partly accounted for by More's sharp tone in writing it. The result was that the strongest side of More, his con-

tinuous reflection on Man Psychologic, was avoided or made light of, and his weakest side, his thought about Man Economic and Man Political, was bombarded to fragments.

To begin with, More made the mistake of not arguing out economic questions on the basis of economics, but instead made a direct appeal to intelligent members of the propertied class to stiffen their morale. "I am not here concerned," he declared, "with Utopian visions, nor, as I have said, am I arguing with those who are honestly persuaded that a socialistic régime is, in our day, or any day, economically or psychologically feasible. My desire is rather to confirm in the dictates of their own reason those who believe that the private ownership of property, including its production and distribution, is, with very limited reservation, essential to the material stability and progress of society. We who have this conviction need very much today to strengthen ourselves against the insidious charms of a misapplied idealism; we need to remind ourselves that laws which would render capital insecure and, by a heavy income tax or other discrimination in favor of labor, would deprive property of its power of easy self-perpetuation, though they speak loudly in the name of humanity, will in the end be subversive of those conditions under which alone any true value of human life can be realized." Do you wonder at the vehement accusations that More was simply rationalizing class prejudice?

We need one more statement to catch the drift of More's views: it is likewise an uncompromising one. "In

simple truth, property may rightly be called the cause of civilization, but, strictly speaking, it is only the occasion of injustice: injustice is inherent in the imperfection of man, and the development of the means of living merely brings into greater prominence what is an unavoidable feature of existence, not for man only but for the whole range of creation, in this puzzling world of ours."

What More did then was to commit himself in advance to capitalist economics, a system which may most briefly be defined as production for the sake of profits or in one word profiteering. Can it be denied that the main motive on which it relies is the desire for gain? And this motivation, as economists admit, introduces an ethical contradiction into the practices of the State. Nevertheless, many people claim that there is nothing wrong with the theory of capitalism, and towards the ethical defect it introduces they adopt two views: one, that the defect may be remedied by education, the other, that it is inherent in human nature. More adopts the latter view.

Now if capitalism is supported by a perfect theory, then from the standpoint of economics there is nothing more to say, no matter how horribly the thing might work in practice. For economics as the science of production abstracts from the human as much as possible and regards our feelings as irrelevant. But *does* capitalism operate on a sound theory? This, in a thinker of Paul Elmer More's eminence, is the first question we should expect him to answer, the more so as it is often charged that the theory of capitalism is only improvised. But as we have seen, he does not. He proceeds almost at once to

declare that "the security of property is the first and all-essential duty of a civilized community"; shortly afterwards he says, "To the civilized man *the rights of property are more important than the right to life.*" *

These statements pass if capitalism is correct in theory. But, once again, is it? In the briefest possible space, I shall give the theoretical objections. It is well understood, of course, that by capitalist economics there are said to be three factors of production, Land, Capital and Labor. Land and Capital, however, have become practically indistinguishable: they are alike tools of production. But is Labor also a tool of production? It is, according to capitalist economics; Land, Capital and Labor exhaust the tools of production, and the user of them is the Capitalist, that is, the owner of the tools of Land and Capital.

But this theory, as every one knows, has been long and brilliantly criticized in the realm of pure thought, precisely the realm in which More should have debated the moot point. For there is a moot point: is Labor a factor of production? No, say the critics, Labor is not congruous with the factors of Land and Capital. Labor is a mere abstraction that hides Laborers. Laborers (i.e., Labor) are the tool-users, the producers themselves, and at bottom economics reduces not to three terms but to just two, Laborers and Tools or Workmen and Stuff. Hence the new industrial synthesis, it is said, must substitute the Laborer for the Capitalist, the real user of the

* It is fair to say that removed from its context this statement sounds harsher than it really is.

real tools of production for the mere owner of them. Therefore, when More speaks of the rights of property, we need to concretize the word property: what he speaks of is the rights of property- or tool-owners or capitalists, and it is precisely those "rights" that now require defence in the region of pure theory.

Proceed one step further, and we shall run up against More's argument for the rights of property-owners as the basis of civilization. Economics, we must remember, is separated from its soul: what is more, it legitimately cuts itself off. Where is its soul? "The soul of economics," writes A. R. Orage in *An Alphabet of Economics,* "is politics, and it is to politics that economics delegates the control of questions such as what shall be produced, by whom, and how the results shall be distributed. . . . To satisfy all our needs and desires without work is really the aim of economic man. It is his object, in fact, to reverse the curse upon Adam. . . . Instead of requiring the improvements in economics to be shared equitably, politics insists upon dividing them inequitably, so that one small class is enabled practically to lift from itself the curse of Adam (that is, it can live without working), while the large class of laborers are permitted to incur a double curse—they work, that is, without living. Economists of the baser sort or who have no political sense pretend that this distribution of the product is itself economic in that it enables the few to secrete Capital (that is to save) and to foster arts and science requiring a long, leisured, and assumed future. Better knowledge, however, convinces us that it is not safe to depend upon a

social class for an economic function." How the author of *Aristocracy and Justice* would answer this, I cannot conceive, for no inkling is given.

We have crossed from economics to politics, and in the latter one of the greatest themes is justice. Naturally, More as a Platonist does not minimize this theme. Justice "is the act of right distribution," he begins by way of definition, "the giving to each man his due." This, please note, is a capitalist-political definition, and we may place beside it for comparison the well-known formula: from each according to his *means,* to each according to his *needs.* Social justice, More continues, "is such a distribution of power and privilege, and of property as the symbol and instrument of these, as at once will satisfy the distinctions of reason among the superior, and will not outrage the feelings of the inferior." But how, one may well ask, can social justice ever be expected to take place when the principle of distribution is the principle of—the pig trough? For economic power in our society precedes and determines the distribution of commodities; the man with the dollars feeds and sometimes gorges and the man without dollars does not; and this does not satisfy the reason and it does outrage the feelings. More himself says we must steel ourselves to a certain extent when viewing this method of distribution. "The first and hardest lesson for each right-minded man in these days is to discipline the heart to accept with equanimity the fatal fact that social justice must include a considerable amount of that disposition of Nature in dealing with her own which we, judging by the standard of the individual soul,

are so ready to call injustice. The first step towards the equipoise of a soul just within itself is to recognize the necessity of a measure of injustice in the relation of man with man and with the world."

I postpone comment on that in order to complete in this place the outline of More's political thought. Guided by the reflections of Edmund Burke, the key idea for him is the formation of "a natural aristocracy without which there is no nation," according to Burke. "The cure of democracy," says More, "is not *more* democracy, but *better* democracy." And better democracy will come when we develop more men who might fit into Burke's celebrated portrait of the men of light and leading: "Men who are qualified for civil liberty in exact proportion to their disposition to put moral chains upon their own appetites; in proportion as their love of justice is above their rapacity; in proportion as their soundness and sobriety of understanding is above their vanity and presumption; in proportion as they are more disposed to listen to the counsels of the wise and good, in preference to the flattery of knaves. Society cannot exist unless a controlling power upon will and appetite be placed somewhere, and the less of it there is within, the more there must be without. It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things, that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters."

This is assuredly a humanistic ideal of a natural aristocracy, but under present economic-political conditions have we any chance of reaching it? We may get the natural aristocrats, but will they be anywhere near the cen-

ters of political power? When we get to the bottom, we are all likely to accept the definition of the political power of the individual as being his power of self-direction; but obviously the individual's power of self-direction presupposes the power of keeping himself alive. That is, the condition of political power is economic power. To continue: voting is a process whereby individuals empower an executive. They increase their powers of self-direction by concentrating them upon the executive who acts in their behalf. But when the voters are of unequal economic power, their votes are necessarily unequal. In fact, the votes of many of them, who have no power of keeping themselves alive but are correctly termed wage-slaves, have no meaning at all: they can guarantee nothing. The executive therefore quite naturally listens only to those whose votes do mean economic power, because these are the only votes coming from individuals who have power of self-direction. It seems to me that this consideration has a very corrosive effect on any dream of a natural aristocracy arising in our plutocratic community.

Because the discussion of More's economics and politics has been rather compact up to this point, a restatement is offered. More, as one of the leaders of the New Humanists, has not dealt with the purely theoretical analyses of capitalism. I do not say he is unable to, or unfamiliar with the arguments: the fact is that he has omitted a theoretical justification. To those who believe that the critique of capitalism has been a devastating one, this is an inexcusable omission. Secondly, to many people, including a considerable number who are not humani-

tarians, capitalism is an inhumane system. They would criticize More's sentiment of justice, which seems to me in this particular to be weak, though it is possible he represses his feelings from dislike of the humanitarian gushing on the topic of social justice. There is, all the same, a love of all men which can, which must, in fact, enter into our sentiment of justice to temper the rigor of it, and this love of all men to which I refer has nothing of the humanitarian "universal embrace" about it. Without love there is in truth no justice. But the difference between humanistic love and humanitarian love I should define as a difference in what in man is loved. Humanism, I quoted Julien Benda as saying in an earlier chapter, holds in honor the abstract quality of what is human, and this permits us to love *all* men, for there is equality in the abstract. Joseph Proudhon (to whom Benda objected) does, I think, express the humane sentiment of justice perfectly without spilling over into humanitarian sentimentality. I mean he singles out that in all men which is worthy of love and toward which one is irresistibly drawn to be just if one loves it. "There is a tendency in every man to develop and force the acceptance of that which is essentially himself—which is, in fact, his own dignity. It results from this that the essential in man being identical and one for all humanity, each of us is aware of himself at the same time as individual and as species; and that an insult is felt by a third party and by the offender himself as well as by the injured person, that in consequence the protest is common. This precisely is what is meant by Justice." It is evident that Proudhon has an idea of Jus-

tice, which is crystal-clear and crystal-hard, and that he feels this idea intensely. The presence of a burning emotion for the idea of Justice I cannot detect in More as a social thinker: his idea seems a mental skeleton wired and strung up by class feelings.

In the third place, I tried to point out that a Burkean aristocracy will have a most difficult time coming into being in a democracy which Georges Sorel defined as the paradise unscrupulous financiers dream of. In short, present-day economics in its effect on politics is all against it.

But if the system of production for profit is untenable intellectually and is inhumane and therefore untenable emotionally, it may still be the best that can be put in practice, granting that human nature is radically imperfect. It may be good enough for man because man is not good enough for a more perfect system. The one fatal objection to certain revolutionary schemes in the end may be that they are too perfect for man as he is, that they will not work in practice as they work on paper, unless man himself is first transformed. More made that objection, and it is possibly his soundest argument. But it will be interesting now to speculate on the possibility that a radical program of economic reform might conceivably fit in with the basic ideas and sentiments of the New Humanists. The Soviet Union I shall leave pretty much out of account, for there you have a *fact* to study and make up your mind about. And possibly that fact in its present degree of unfoldment demands not so much an intellectual and moral decision as suspended judgment

from the individual American. Furthermore, I agree with T. S. Eliot that Russian communism like Italian fascism seems to have died as a political theory in becoming a political fact. Our present purpose which is to determine how flexible the Humanist attitude may be in economics and politics is better served by reference to a single extraordinary revolutionary (our example will be Sorel) than it would be by an attempt in too short a space to analyze a complicated fact that contains so many peculiarly Russian ingredients to be subtracted before it is really instructive to us.

Perhaps the most fascinating of all the theorists of the social revolution (but who reads him in America?) is Georges Sorel (1847-1922), whose *Reflections on Violence* was translated into English by T. E. Hulme. Karl Marx had plotted out the acts of the Capitalist tragedy, but by planting the idea of a class struggle so prominently into the minds of men, by making men more conscious of the opposition of capitalist and proletarian, Marx also introduced an unforeseen factor working not for class war but for social peace. Clearly understanding by the aid of Marx that society was in a state of internal war, the peacemakers arose in mass. There was a general amelioration of working conditions, there were concessions from the capitalists, there grew up a pronounced tendency to blur and soften the issues, to make everything a parliamentarian question. Sorel determined to combat this movement toward pacifying the proletariat, and the means he chose to throw into relief again the essential struggle of

the classes was to concentrate on the depiction of the last act of a tragedy that might conceivably play on for centuries. He concentrated on the vision of the general strike, the vast social cataclysm that was to overthrow the capitalist régime. By means of this vision he hoped to counteract the parliamentarian socialists and the philanthropic capitalists, and thus preserve the purity of the class struggle.

The results were curious. Mussolini has told of his youthful fervor for Sorel's doctrine, and Sorel wrote an apology for Bolshevism. The best thinker that French syndicalism has had, Sorel was nevertheless saluted with enthusiasm by Frenchmen of the extreme right: he was hailed by the Action Française! Pierre Lasserre, the anti-Rousseauist, has written a book about him, *Georges Sorel: Théoricien de l'Impérialisme,* and many Marxists have been indignant because Sorel considered himself a true follower of Marx. Evidently a paradoxical thinker. But he was not. He was miscomprehended by many for the sole reason that he was a revolutionary classicist, which is not a paradoxical combination.

What Sorel did was to separate the working class movement from the democratic or liberal-romantic or humanitarian ideology with which it is habitually associated. He demonstrated forcefully that there was no inevitable connection between them. They were not Siamese twins, not even twins, but strangers who by an accident of history had been chained together for three score years. Sorel's intellect filed through the chains and showed that one

could be revolutionary in economics and classical in ethics —to the astonishment of everybody.

As he has had practically no vogue in American revolutionary circles, it is excusable to say a few words about his personal development before singling out some aspects of his classical ethics. Proudhon had tried to combine the classical ideal with socialism, and Sorel seems to have taken his first direction from Proudhon. Marx blinded him with light for a time, but it was characteristic of Sorel that he always recovered his sight and eventually saw things with his own eyes. Nietzsche was another master whose teachings he divided into the valuable ideas and the rubbish. Proudhon, Marx, Nietzsche—there were lesser masters he carefully sifted: Bergson, Vico. He read widely, profoundly. In his first book he maintained—a Nietzschean idea—that Socrates represented the decadence of Athenian life, the charge being that Socrates introduced expediency and calculation into ethics. He wrote a study of Renan and a study entitled *Illusions du Progrés* which the anti-revolutionary Maritain has commended for its thorough destruction of the middle-class notion of progress. The Dreyfus case completely disillusioned Sorel with democracy and he plunged into the anti-patriotic extreme revolutionary movement on whose behalf he fought Jaurès and the other parliamentarian socialists with all the withering scorn of a bold thinker and a bold man.

I have said that he severed the ties between the revolutionary workers' movement and the romantic-humanitarian ideology. He did this by scathing criticism of the

sham religiosity of the romantic movement, by excoriating the doctrine of progress, by exposing the middle class conception of science. The last is worth quoting for the benefit of the numerous Baconians to be found in our own liberal and revolutionary groups. "The history of scientific superstitions," Sorel asserts, "is of the deepest interest to philosophers who wish to understand Socialism. During the nineteenth century there existed an incredible scientific ingenuousness which was the direct outcome of the illusions that had aroused so much excitement towards the end of the eighteenth century. Because astronomers had managed to calculate the tables of the moon, it was believed that the aim of all science was to forecast the future with accuracy; because Le Verrier had been able to indicate the probable position of the planet Neptune—which had never been seen, and which accounted for the disturbances of observable planets—it was believed that science could remedy the defects of society, and indicate what measures should be taken to bring about the disappearance of the unpleasant things in the world. It may be said that this was the *middle-class conception of science:* it certainly corresponds very closely to the mental attitude of those capitalists, who, ignorant of the perfected appliances of their workshops, yet direct industry, and always find ingenious inventors to get them out of difficulties. For the middle-class science is a mill which produces solutions to all the problems we are faced with: science is no longer considered as a perfected means to knowledge, but only as a recipe for procuring certain advantages."

There is a great deal, too, in Sorel that might be advantageously perused by our social reformers. For the benefit of humanitarians, I shall transcribe Sorel's deep objection to optimists in the ranks of reform. "The optimist in politics is an inconstant and even dangerous man, because he takes no account of the great difficulties presented by his projects; these projects seem to him to possess a force of their own, which tends to bring about their realization all the more easily as they are, in his opinion, destined to produce the happiest results. He frequently thinks that small reforms in the political constitution, and, above all, in the personnel of government, will be sufficient to direct social development in such a way as to mitigate those evils of the contemporary world which seem so harsh to the sensitive mind. As soon as his friends come into power, he declares that it is necessary to let things alone for a little, not to hurry too much, and to learn how to be content with whatever their own benevolent intentions prompt them to do. It is not always self-interest that suggests these expressions of satisfaction, as people have often believed; self-interest is strongly aided by vanity and by the illusions of philosophy. The optimist passes with remarkable facility from revolutionary anger to the most ridiculous social pacificism.

"If he possesses an exalted temperament, and if unhappily he finds himself armed with a great power, permitting him to realize the ideal he has fashioned, the optimist may lead his country into the worst disasters. He is not long in finding out that social transformations are not brought about with the ease that he had counted on;

he then supposes that this is the fault of his contemporaries, instead of explaining what actually happens by historical necessities; he is tempted to get rid of people whose obstinacy seems to him to be so dangerous to the happiness of all. During the Terror, the men who spilt most blood were precisely those who had the greatest desire to let their equals enjoy the golden age they had dreamt of, and who had the most sympathy with human wretchedness: optimists, idealists, and sensitive men, the greater desire they had for universal happiness the more inexorable they showed themselves."

Obviously this side of Sorel is quite in accord with the reiterations of More and Babbitt. Humanitarianism, they repeat, is a menace because in its fatuous hope of a brotherhood of man without a prior discipline of man's egoistic impulses, it leads directly to the shambles and the rise of a bloodstained dictator. Making light of the obstacles in its path, humanitarianism, when the obstacles will not vanish at the outflowing of sympathy, loses its head and massacres. But it is not in the least implied that Sorel, the enemy of Rousseauism, was on his positive side humanistic. Quite the reverse: he rejected the method of the golden mean, and for reasons that have some weight. The following paragraph will serve as his criticism of American Humanism, prepared years in advance of its full emergence.

"The ideas held by modern ethical writers are drawn mainly from those of Greece in its time of decadence; Aristotle, living in a period of transition, combined ancient values with values that, as time went on, were to prevail;

war and production had ceased to occupy the attention of the most distinguished men of the towns, who sought, on the contrary, to secure an easy existence for themselves; the most important thing was the establishment of friendly relations between the better educated men of the community, and the fundamental maxim was that of the golden mean. The new morality was to be acquired principally by means of the habits which the young Greek would pick up in mixing with cultivated people. It may be said here we are on the level of an ethic adapted to consumers; it is not astonishing then that Catholic theologians still find Aristotle's ethics an excellent one, for they themselves take the consumer's point of view."

Sorel, as a matter of fact, had a vestige of the classical religious spirit and not the humanistic temper at all. He was an absolutist in ethics. He was a pessimist, convinced of social determinism, which he compared to the Calvinist doctrine of predestination, and convinced of the wretchedness of man, or one might say, original sin. The march to deliverance he said was narrowly conditioned by these two: the iron laws of social determinism and the weakness of man. Yet he believed in "a *secret virtue* which assures the continued progress of the world" and defined it as "this striving towards perfection which manifests itself, in spite of the absence of any personal, immediate, and proportional reward."

Thus, he tried to root the syndicalist movement in a classical pessimistic conception of man and to identify the growth of the movement with the regeneration of the world. His finest stroke was his method for rousing the

group of sentiments necessary for the regeneration: the sentiments of disinterestedness, heroism, glory, and even sublimity. It was the method of the myth, from which incidentally the New Humanists might learn something, it seems to me, which would give a real driving emotional power to their campaign. What that something is has already been suggested in the chapter on *The Classical Revival Abroad*.

Sorel advocated the myth of the general strike. Just as the early Christians had looked forward to an Apocalypse, had prepared themselves rigorously for it, had shown the most heroic qualities in enduring persecution, so, Sorel argued, the proletariat should look forward always to a decisive Napoleonic battle, a social catastrophe for which every least action was a preparation, and they should understand what the function of violence is, namely, to keep perfectly clear the grandiose outline of the class struggle. Into the criticism of this we need not venture. It should be noted, however, that Sorel explained carefully that "myths are not descriptions of things, but expressions of determinations to act." And finally, mention should be made of his view that the bourgeoisie must keep up its warlike morale. He felt it essential for the future success of civilization that the proletariat should take over a vigorous, and not a decadent, system of capitalist production. No doubt this idea was one of the factors of his popularity with the group around Charles Maurras.

My treatment of Sorel, I am aware, is too scanty to serve as an introduction to his ideas, and at the same time perhaps too long for the purpose now, which is simply to

suggest by referring to Sorel that the good man of Rousseau and the Marxian revolutionist are not inseparable companions. Sorel made a new coupling, the Homeric hero and the social revolutionist, a combination that I happen to think would bode better for the future.

Reverting to our proper topic, the question is: can Humanism and the revolutionary movement join hands? Extremely unlikely, of course, and yet I can conceive of a Humanist revolutionary. He would have convinced himself that in the clash on first principles of political economy (between first principles there can be no mediation) the revolutionaries were right, and he would therefore oppose the forces of capitalism as strongly as More opposes socialism. But in any revolutionary party he joined, he would have an Augean stable of illusions to clear out before he could satisfy himself that the revolutionists could really fulfil their pledges of a better society. He would have to persuade his comrades to throw out the accumulated rubbish of humanitarianism, the naïve notions of the goodness at heart of the proletarian, the intellectual fallacies, the spilth of feeling that you will find rampant in a writer like Upton Sinclair. This clearing away of sloppy sentiment and fuzzy ideas would be of enormous advantage to the revolutionary movement, but, as I say, it is extremely unlikely that a Humanist Hercules will rise to perform it. Sooner or later the technique of mediation would, in all probability, be put to such a strain that it would be relegated to a secondary place, and our hypothetical humanistic revolutionist would make foremost the method of the myth or some other disci-

plinary conception. When that happened, he might retain humanistic elements in his life, but he would cease to be a Humanist in the Babbittean sense.

There is, however, much of a medicinal nature that the best minds among our social revolutionaries can absorb from their opponents, More and Babbitt, without undergoing conversion to conservatism. Let us hope that the bitter taste will not deter them. For they will be better off in respect to background, values and psychological interpretation of man than before.

After all, Sorelism in the United States is a matter of academic interest. Extremists of the left constitute a negligible and senseless group, and the moderate socialists are pitifully weak. The liberals? Bankrupt in ideas; seemingly ineffective in political action; decadent in morale if one may judge by the slackness of the men being groomed to follow the generation of Croly, Lovett, Villard and Alvin Johnson. As for the labor movement in general, is it not the despair of Communist, Socialist and Liberal alike? Inaccessible to ideas, unrebellious, shortsighted, what can be hoped from the American Federation of Labor other than a perpetual seesaw battle for higher wages and shorter hours? The Wandering Jew, Daniel Halévy told Sorel, may be taken as a symbol of the highest aspirations of mankind, condemned as he is to march for ever without knowing rest. But there is naught of the Wandering Jew about the groups just mentioned, and a Sorelist among them would wear his heart

out in the attempt to convey a sublime vision of future ethics.

For contrast, we may turn to Babbitt's political theorizing in *Democracy and Leadership,* which has been called without exaggeration perhaps the weightiest book in its field written by an American. "When studied with any degree of thoroughness," writes Babbitt in his introduction, "the economic problem will be found to run into the political problem, the political problem in turn into the philosophical problem, and the philosophical problem itself to be almost indissolubly bound up at last with the religious problem." The order is correct. But although Babbitt thinks more coolly and, I suspect, with greater ease on politics and economics than More, he too is least satisfactory in economics: his treatment of that science is almost incidental and certainly slighting. In the opinion of many, this will not do.

Let us unearth what there is of Babbitt's thought on the economic problem. He rightly criticizes unorthodox political economy for its purely quantitative view of work. True enough, as he notes, orthodox political economy prepared the way for this view: Locke practically identified work with physical effort and made it the sole legitimate source of property, and Adam Smith tended to a similar conception of work in relation to property. But the Marxist, according to Babbitt, fell into the deeper fallacy of identifying work with value. Babbitt then proceeds to discriminate among physical work, mental working on the material order, and ethical work on oneself.

The discrimination is valid, but in making it Babbitt

seems to accept the interpretations of orthodox political economy. Value, he appears to hold, is largely determined by the law of supply and demand and by competition. He notes that "as a result of the concentrated mental effort of the gifted few, an effort displayed either in invention or else in organization and management, the common laborer may today enjoy comforts that were out of the reach even of the opulent only two or three generations ago," and he adds the laborer "should be the first to recognize that exceptional capacity should receive exceptional rewards." Quite a point is made of competition. "Above all, social justice is likely to be unsound in its partial or total suppression of competition. Without competition it is impossible that the ends of true justice should be fulfilled, namely, that every man should receive according to his works. . . . The remedy for the evils of competition is found in the moderation and magnanimity of the strong and successful, and not in any sickly sentimentalizing over the lot of the under dog."

But surely Babbitt knows the arguments against each of these points, and my regret is that he did not, while making his defence of the established economic order, deal closely with the specific arguments against it. Let me cite some of these which seem to necessitate refutation if one is to defend with a good intellectual conscience the existing system. The Law of Supply and Demand (or L. S. D. for short) has absolutely no weight outside the market: it is concerned only with the relations of Sellers and Buyers, Supply being the abstraction of all the Sellers and Demand the abstraction of all the Buyers.

Outside the market what happens? "In all transactions between friends, between members of the same family, between Governments and their servants, in public services, and in all institutions run socially or by gentlemen, L. S. D. is kicked out of doors and the Rule of Supply and Need takes its place," says Orage in *An Alphabet of Economics*. Again, I should say Babbitt does not separate Capitalists and Management as he ought to, when he speaks of the gifted minority to whom the workman owes his increase in comfort (by the way, is increased comfort a relevant argument?). Laborers are responsible to Management and must always be. Management today is responsible to the Capitalist, but must it always be? That is the question of moment to those who speculate about a new industrial synthesis. As for the competition extolled by Babbitt, that has to do with the price system which, it is a commonplace, is superimposed on the productive system. We may profitably hear from Orage again. "Production concerns values; competition concerns prices. From production to competition is a transition from value-creating to price-fixing; and the competitive system is one in which prices are left to be decided by the play of the market. . . . Essentially Competition is sale by auction, and usually without reserve." A reserve price being impossible for perishable commodities, "Competition is thus all in favor of non-perishable commodities (Capital in particular); but it is all against perishable commodities, and Labor in particular." Under those conditions one may have a feeling for the under dog whose energy and skill are perishable

that cannot fairly be described as sickly sentimentality. That in his plight the under dog should have to hear so much about the bracing effects of keen competition for him in industrial society—this is adding mockery to injury.

My own view is that capitalism cannot be whitewashed, and for the reason that it is founded on only a comparatively narrow portion of human psychology. It is a function of Practical Man or Instinctive Man: it enormously stimulates greed and virtually debars the entrance of any generous motive. It is guaranteed to make men acquisitive but not magnanimous. For my life, I cannot see how it can admit within itself any forces of regeneration. Unsound in theory, tending always to be swindling and ruthless, it manages to work, but only after a fashion that can satisfy no one but a very small class of profiteers. There are plenty to make emotional protests against this state of economic affairs but we ought to supplement them with hard practical criticism. For that let us go to a quarter not tinged with Bolshevik or anti-capitalist sentiment: let us resort to the advocates of the highly interesting Douglas Social Credit Plan in England. They point out that the purpose of an economic system is to produce as much as possible and to get the things produced into the hands of consumers. If we are producing at our maximum, and there is not enough to go around, that is, if only a proportion of the potential consumers can be satisfied, then there is nothing more to say from the economic viewpoint. Suffering from unsatisfied need is irrelevant to the economist if maximum production can

provide for only fifty per cent, let us say, of our population. But the fact is that we produce nowhere near our maximum, not even in wartime when production speeds up enormously. Limited or failing production, say the Douglas people, is only a specter: nothing more. Hence, it follows that the present system is criticized in the most damaging way by two undoubted facts: (1) the presence of poverty on a large scale, that is the presence of hordes of potential consumers who cannot acquire commodities, and (2) by unemployment, which as I write is estimated at from three millions to eight millions in our country, unemployment meaning unused producing ability. We can produce more, immensely more than we do: witness the fact of unemployment. We can consume far more: witness the fact of poverty. Understand this, and you have some idea of the sheer inefficiency of the established system. One important qualification must be added: the Social Credit people find the source of the trouble not in private ownership of the tools of production or in unequal distribution but in the money industry, in the financial system, which is what they propose to reform.

I have gone into details of criticism in order to show that the New Humanists are fairly caught on the capital charge of *failing to recognize the economic problem.* However sensitive they may be to the "excesses" of capitalism, they accept it and the financial system with it as the defensible status quo, and with no great marshalling of reasons either. I would urge on them, not any one of the proposed solutions current, but the adoption of the mood and temper appropriate to a baffling problem whose

dimensions cannot be ignored. The case as I diagnose it is similar to that in which the modern man finds himself put in respect to science. The case calls for an awakened curiosity, earnest search for solutions, the keenest criticism of both the status quo and new theories, the cultivation of impartiality. I should like to see the New Humanists with their background of ideas, their equipment for criticism, their breadth of vision, convert themselves into eager, impartial students of our common economic problems. I find them to be not free-ranging students in this field, but tied uncritically to the existing industrial order, an order furthermore that has had a comparatively brief historical existence. But why should they not become our best critics of economic questions, uniting general culture to familiarity with the special science of production?

What we need stands out with absolute clarity: a livelier research into the alternatives to or revisions of capitalism and a livelier criticism of these alternatives or revisions. Many American intellectuals at the present moment, discouraged with democracy, think of only two alternative possibilities, Bolshevism and Fascism, each, I may say, being abhorrent to the New Humanist. For the American Humanist appears to commit himself completely to the democratic experiment, and to have more respect for the old ideas of democracy than you usually encounter nowadays in our disillusioned intelligentsia. But what vitiates democracy so terribly that it becomes a pretended thing? Profiteer economics. On the other hand, in the case of Bolshevism as in the case of Fascism,

democracy disappears; individualism goes down to defeat before the dictatorship. If we would retain democracy then, the fact not the pretence, we must revise the economics associated with it, and that perhaps is possible. At any rate, we have not exhausted all the alternatives even in speculating about revision. We have not even assembled all of them before us for study and discussion.

The proof of this is our ignorance of the dazzling Social Credit Plan of Major C. H. Douglas, which I mentioned above. Agitated for in England ever since the Great War, it has yet failed to cross the Atlantic, or rather one has to use a high-powered microscope to see the few American students of it. This is easily explainable, however, since with justice Major Douglas has been called the Einstein of economics, and a considerable amount of free brain, of unmortgaged intellectual energy, must be expended to grasp his novel and yet non-revolutionary, non-confiscatory scheme of reform. Although I know it is impossible to understand his proposal from the germ, I yet will give the germ-proposition on the chance that it will pique the curiosity of those rare readers who can detect even in the germ the presence of a new principle that promises to be worth study. The gist of his proposal is simply to regulate prices by productivity, by relation, that is, to supply. I will add that the Douglas criticism of Marxian economics is that it confuses ownership with control. We must look, not to ownership, but to the financial system for the real control that is exercised today over industry. Has Major Douglas, as it is claimed, reached the bottom of economics?

I think the New Humanists should be interested in the question, and if they should, they would certainly steal a march on that portion of intellectual America which prides itself on its vigilance for new ideas, but which to some of us often appears a little sluggish in living up to its boast. Perhaps in the Social Credit Plan the Humanists would discover not only the key economic theory, but a theory which when applied would make their politics entirely feasible. For the Plan alters nothing but the financial system.

We have all seen what one writer calls the degeneration of government from a plane of democratic idealism and tolerable administration to a plane of control by political machines, ward-bosses and racketeers, and seeing it a great many intellectuals have given up hope of democracy, have ceased to be even interested in it. But this writer, Jean Toomer, goes on to speak for a larger mass of our citizens when he notes that "there is still enough idealism left in us, there is still active in us a sense of decency sufficiently strong to make us feel unhappy about this trend. We cannot laugh at it or shrug our shoulders and play the game . . . there still exists in most of us a fairly strong wish to see the American political experiment turn out well; and for this reason we ask of a political writer that he show a degree of resistance to political rottenness, a degree of insistence on decency, ability, and intelligence in politics." Babbitt's *Democracy and Leadership,* the supreme Humanist treatise on American political thought, was written not for futilitarians or cynics but precisely for the mass of intelligent citizens

described by Toomer who wish to see democracy turn out well. The baldest of summaries must here suffice for a work that should have given rise to a whole literature of commentary.

Democracy and Leadership studies types of political thinking from Aristotle to Woodrow Wilson, with special attention given to the naturalistic imperialism of Machiavelli, the idyllic imagination of Rousseau when it dreams on politics, and the moral imagination of Edmund Burke. Like More, Babbitt leans heavily upon Burke's ideas of a natural aristocracy, the power of example, and the imaginative justification of privileges.

One of the strongest features of the book is its study of the humility of Asia expressed in Buddhism and Confucianism. The West learned sufficiently the lesson of self-reliance in the Renascence, but it has not learned the lesson of humility, and from the Babbittean standpoint this is essential.

A very brief description of Babbitt as a political thinker would note first that he is an anti-imperialist as well as an anti-Bolshevist. He is in fact an old-fashioned democrat who thinks that whatever the quantitative achievements of the United States have been, qualitatively we have thus far failed. He opposes the Jeffersonian tradition and regrets the victory of Andrew Jackson. His tradition is strongly unionist. Washington, John Marshall, Lincoln, the last viewed as a unionist rather than an emancipator—these are the principal figures in his democratic tradition. It is perhaps not too much to say that Babbitt considers the Declaration of Independence

a Rousseauistic document and the Constitution a humanistic document. At any rate, he makes much of the Supreme Court as a check on the spontaneous popular will and stands firmly for constitutional democracy as against direct democracy.

His program? The formation of a Socratic remnant. We need a movement, he says, in our political life which will be Socratic, Aristotelian and Christian, a movement, that is, that will stress definition, habit and humility. The beginning is to subject our catchwords—the political terms that sway our imaginations and actions—to a Socratic dichotomy, and in this book Babbitt himself performs some masterly dichotomizing of such infectious words as "service," "liberty" and "imagination." The Aristotelian phase of the program is education along the lines we observed in our last chapter. The Christian phase has to do with the recovery of humility.

It is evident, I think, even from the bare outline how Babbitt runs the political problem into the philosophical and religious problems. Where one boggles is at the very beginning, the economic problem as it merges into the political. That is, Babbitt's politics has to compete with his economics, and at the present time economics in practice is the determinant. As in the case of More, Babbitt is most convincing in dealing with Man Psychologic, least convincing in handling Man Economic. His enemies, I may add, are most persuasive about Man Economic and least equipped to study Man Psychologic.

The economics of commercial men (the science, that is, of production for profit, not the science of production for use) puts the whole question of right relations between man and man far up in the air. We can theorize about these relations as much as we like but when we drop to earth again, present economic habits spoil the theories. There is, for instance, nothing in the least degree Utopian about Babbitt's politics. He is thoroughly realistic in his political vein, but all the time he is working in that vein he presupposes not a reform of the economics of commercial men but an amenability on the part of this black economics to his theory of democracy.

In this chapter I have deliberately tried to keep the problem of relations between men (politics and government) in the air, as in an earlier chapter I deliberately endeavored to raise man's concern with the physical universe up into the air. That is where I think such topics should be now: they should be open questions toward which the best attitude is an open attitude. Therefore I used a writer like Georges Sorel as a wedge to break apart our fixed ideas about classicism, romanticism and revolution.

To conclude the chapter, I shall now give several social attitudes which I think are, in our time of dissolving answers and new-formed questions, compatible with American Humanism as a basis. They are a policy of detachment, the religious view of Cæsar and his things, liberalism (yes, liberalism, but a special kind!) and anarchism (also a special kind). And although in discussing these attitudes, I shall refer them to the Amer-

ican Humanist, please understand that in this connection I am identifying the intelligent skeptical modern man with the Humanist. What, in short, should be the rôle of the civilized man toward practical affairs? He should adopt a policy of detachment, urges Julien Benda in his recent widely debated book, *The Treason of the Intellectuals*.

In this work Benda deplores the entrance into practical life of European intellectuals. For, he says, there are two moralities, a worldly practical morality and a disinterested "clerical" morality, and the two should not mingle to their confusion. They have existed parallel throughout civilization, the "clerk" or intellectual guiding himself by one set of values, the layman by a totally different set. But today, charges Benda, the "clerk" forsakes his disinterestedness, enters the practical world and promotes the growth of national, class, race and party passions and hatreds. This is the treason to the intellectual order committed by such diverse men as Kipling, D'Annunzio, Sorel, Péguy and Maurras. Fidelity to the intellectual order is detachment from political and class activities: it is setting the example of pure devotion to the values of culture and to those alone. Thus the intellectuals affect life, not by throwing themselves into its partizanships and justifying them, but by removing from them and setting up an example whereby men may know their own lay morality for what it is.

This clearly is not the view of More and Babbitt. Their natural aristocracy is not conceived as aloof but as exerting pressure directly on lay affairs, as seeking to control

them by its superior wisdom and morality. But should the New Humanists gain in numbers, I would expect to see among them before long adherents of Benda's thesis, for personal predilections will always lead some men toward such a standpoint.

Benda, it should be observed, does not quite take the religious view of market and state affairs. "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's" specifies the clear vision of two orders of things, but is actually the code of a very paradoxical and rare type of person, the unworldly man of the world. The things of Cæsar are to be known for what they are and conformed to for what they are: they are not, however, to be justified. In this way the religious person is in the world, but it is not his home, he is not of it because his estimate of it differs from the estimates of the men around him. Consider Socrates' outward conformity to the customs of Athenian life and his inward non-conformity. Why this paradox in the religious person? Is it that he sees simultaneously the world's need for reform and the impossibility of reform? Does he see that things in the main must be as they are, and only individual salvation is possible? What makes him render unto Cæsar, but with such perfect lucidity and no laudation, the things that belong to him?

The nut in these days of remoteness from religious inspiration is too hard for us to crack. We can only wonder at the early Christian secret of accommodating oneself to the world and yet placing oneself above its customs and grandeurs. So though Benda approaches the

religious conception of two moralities to be adjusted to, he actually counsels withdrawal from the first, the practical world, and a resolute turning to the world of ideals. More and Babbitt, on the other hand, as I have tried to show, actually do a little justifying of the economics of Cæsar. They would have the civilized man do more than put up with a necessary evil: they would have him defend it. All in all, we are not likely to see much evidence in our era of a genuinely early Christian view toward the market place and the legislative hall.

But can we imagine the undogmatic liberal lamb and the dogmatic humanistic lion lying down together in the breast of one individual? Not long ago I dismissed the liberals, perhaps too airily, for their bankruptcy in ideas and their impotence in action. Not to speak of the betrayal of liberal hopes by the Treaty of Versailles, impotent the liberals had to confess themselves to be after the failure of their concerted effort to secure a new trial for Sacco and Vanzetti. Do their best, they could not avert that tragic stain of suspicion on Massachusetts justice that will never wear off. Again in the Smith-Hoover presidential election, they were as ineffective as their enemies could wish. But one does not mock the defeated, one only asks that such bitter lessons as defeat gives should be patiently conned. Has American liberalism shown in the last two years any disposition to revise itself, or to seize on a new idea, or to adopt a new set of tactics, or to overcome its defects? Apparently only two liberals have really tried to overhaul their policies and they are Walter Lippmann and the late Herbert Croly. Of the two,

Croly in my estimation went deeper in his fragmentary writings in the *New Republic* than did Lippmann in *A Preface to Morals.* From 1924 until his illness in 1928 Croly appeared to be, in Arnold's language, "turning a stream of fresh and free thought" upon his previous stock notions and habits, and in 1927 and 1928 the results began to be excitingly visible in his editorials and occasional articles. In particular, the defeat of the agitation for Sacco and Vanzetti seems to have deepened his sense that some all-important element was missing from American Liberalism. Liberalism must transform itself into a discipline of self-liberation was his conclusion, and he hit on the term, Socratic Liberalism, to distinguish the new conception from the old faith in legislative action and environmental improvements. "What liberals need is not a new concrete political or social program," he concluded. "They need a new evaluation of all programs, a new attitude towards them and a new method of giving reality to them."

Liberals have always been short on two things: skepticism and a full realization of the inner life. They have been long on curiosity, on tolerance, on human kindness, on a sense of the plasticity of man, on optimism. They have put their faith in what Arnold called *machinery,* that is, in programs of social and economic engineering, many of which have turned out to be both available and realistic plans of action. Generally speaking, the American liberal believes or hopes that the ethical defect which capitalist economy introduces into the practices of the State can be overcome by education, a belief that contrasts

with the pessimistic view of More, which we noted, namely, that the defect is inherent in human nature. Croly's radical proposal was simply to marry liberal curiosity and sentiment to skepticism. "Although," he wrote in an important editorial entitled *Realistic Liberalism* (*New Republic,* November 23, 1927), "liberalism was fundamentally an attempt to give increasing dignity, enlightenment and fulfilment to human life, it has moved towards its goal almost entirely by trying to improve the political and economic environment of modern men and women. Its program called for the services of expert political or social engineers and invoked the legislative power of the State to put the program, which might be either negative or positive, into effect. But in all its efforts, it assumed that an improvement of the conditions in which people lived would liberate a corresponding moral and intellectual energy in the people themselves. From this point of view, liberalism was a well intentioned but inconsiderate attempt to redeem human nature without asking human beings to participate in their own redemption, except by devising social programs, winning elections, passing laws, inventing more machines and increasing individual and social capital. They were never asked to revolutionize and reform the inside of their own minds or to ponder what, if any, the relation might be between political self-government and individual self-government. They have rarely asked the question whether a liberated society, in which there was little or no oppression, no privation and no monopoly of power,

wealth and comfort, might, nevertheless, be composed of extremely cheap individuals."

It is commonly thought that skepticism of the machinery of social reform puts a blight on one's desires for material improvements. But it does not necessarily do that, certainly not in Croly's case. Skepticism does blight opportunism and the exaggerated faith attached to projects of external betterment, but the desire to experiment remains: only the experimenter realizes he must not be cocksure of himself, he must be humble and admit the need of a rigorous self-culture prior to social experiment. Skepticism is in fact a great reviver of the inner life, and Croly became in his last articles a preacher on the neglected text, "The Kingdom of Heaven is within." Like Arnold, he declared in substance that culture is a condition of internal working. "Liberals are invited, consequently, to repent of their dependence on mechanism and to practice on themselves the faith in enlightenment which has always been their stock-in-trade. . . . The only realistic policy for liberals is to start methodically to stretch and intensify their consciousness in the hope that it will become eventually a more adequate instrument for the watching, the understanding, the unfolding, the harmonizing and the deliverance of their personal lives."

To Croly, then, the important thing was that liberalism should be more than a doctrine or a program: it should be a discipline of self-liberation, for only the self-liberated are qualified to become liberators of others. Anybody, of course, can mouth generalities about self-emancipation, internal development, and so on, and anybody does. The

rare person—the person who really means to do what he says—goes a step further and inquires and speculates about a method of self-liberation, about some definite means of converting rhetoric into facts. This, in such editorials as *Socratic Liberalism* (*New Republic,* December 28, 1927) and in such articles as *The Human Potential in the Pacific, Christians, Beware,* and *Consciousness and the Religious Life* Croly proceeded to do. He wanted a scientific method for self-study and self-development, and he actually proposed one summed up in this sentence: "So the hypothetical separation by the individual of himself as an observer from the accidents and the compulsions of his actualized personality, and his systematic effort to be aware of how this personality behaves, may prove to be the indispensable route to liberated and reunited consciousness of self."

This, as you see, sets up a working dualism in human psychology. But the interesting thing is that Croly's effort to introduce at the back of liberal sentiments and liberal intellectual interests the two elements of skepticism and a practical concern with one's own psychology was completely abortive. Not even the editors of Croly's own paper have picked up his revolutionary proposals and carried them forward in the slightest way.* The most profound liberal in America thoroughly failed when it came to lifting liberalism out of its groove. But unless I am very wrong, some kind of *entente* could be worked out

* In the special supplement of the *New Republic* for July 16, 1930, which was devoted to homage to Herbert Croly, the psychological conclusions Croly reached were touched obliquely, lightly or haltingly by some of the contributors, totally ignored by the rest.

between a Socratic Liberal and a Socratic Conservative or Humanist. They would at least find a ground for basic agreement and differ, when they differed, on opinions as to the passing trends of the time.

Finally, we come to that special brand of anarchism which I anticipate will be acceptable to some Humanists in the future. The New Humanists have been freely upbraided by many people anxious as they say "to do good to others." What! these well intentioned persons have said, bother with self-reform when there are so many ills of the world to be alleviated! Play with definitions, heed the Inner Check, talk about discipline when social abuses abound! "And what," says one of the epigoni of the *New Republic,* "has Humanism to do with the scene outside my window: with the jobless men who saunter in the dusk, or the dying village, or the paper mill abandoned across the river—this mill whose owners have gone South where labor is cheap?"

A lengthy reply to that has been in print for seventy-six years in the whole final section of Thoreau's first chapter in *Walden.* "As for Doing-Good, that is one of the professions which are full . . . Men say, practically, Begin where you are and such as you are, without aiming to become of more worth and with kindness aforethought go about doing good. If I were to preach at all in this strain, I should say rather, Set about being good. As if the sun should stop when he had kindled his fires up to the splendor of a moon or a star, of the sixth magnitude, and go about like a Robin Goodfellow, peeping in at every cottage window, inspiring lunatics, and tainting

meats, and making darkness visible, instead of steadily increasing his genial heat and beneficence till he is of such brightness that no mortal can look him in the face, and then, and in the meanwhile too, going about the world in his own orbit, doing it good, or rather, as a truer philosophy has discovered, the world going about him getting good. . . . There are a thousand hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the root and it may be that he who bestows the largest amount of time and money on the needy is doing the most by his mode of life to produce that misery which he strives in vain to relieve. . . . Do not stay to be an overseer of the poor, but endeavor to become one of the worthies of the world."

This is the twofold defence of the individualist: he confesses his doubt that men's knowledge and powers *as they are* can do more than merely meddle and muddle in social relations and he insists upon the regeneration of oneself as being in the long run beneficial to those around one. It is the very essence of the social criticism of the American Humanists and conceivably to some temperaments among them it might lead, as it did in Thoreau's case, to personal secession from the United States! The social anarchist like Thoreau is not heartless: he is convinced of being helpless—like the man who has not learned to swim and sees some one offshore drowning. The humanitarian plunges to the rescue, but as he cannot swim, the only result is he drowns too. The Humanist suffers from the spectacle of drowning souls, but he may sensibly conclude with Thoreau that nothing can be

effected toward saving them until one has oneself learned to swim.

If American Humanism spreads, my prediction is that we shall eventually see its adherents manifest as rich a variety stemming from certain conventions of thought, feeling and discipline as we perceive in Renascence Humanism. We shall see humanistic disciples of Thoreau doggedly resisting the pleas of the Doing-Good professors, liberal Humanists annoying by their socratic tendencies the orthodox liberals, detached Humanists accused of defeatism and retreating to ivory towers of thought, Socratic Conservatives like More and Babbitt, and perhaps even a few Humanists tinged with the religious view of politics and government. But we shall hardly see any measure of popularity attach itself to any of the positions I have adumbrated.

XI

THE DILEMMA OF THE LIBERATED

> *"Intellectual freedom is earlier and easier than complete spiritual freedom."*—T. S. Eliot in the *Hound and Horn* magazine.

In the last sixty years isolated individuals of distinction have told the Western world that it was living in a state of decline. Nietzsche was probably the most tormented of these prophets and used the strongest language. Modern man to him was an instrument out of tune: mankind itself was degenerating. We in America had Henry Adams charting the change from mediæval unity to twentieth century multiplicity and theorizing about the degradation of the democratic dogma. Today Bertrand Russell is quoted as saying that the clock of Europe has been running down since the Renascence, Chesterton advises us that we are simply existing on our Catholic capital and using it up, Whitehead notes that science has lived on the accumulated capital of the ideas of the seventeenth century and that religion has been weakening for several centuries. But all these contemporaries manage nevertheless to keep a cheerful outlook, Whitehead elaborating thoughts for a new scientific and philosophic synthesis, Chesterton rejoicing in his personal rediscovery of Catholic truths, and Russell being, as a wit has expressed it, terribly at ease in hell. The man with the

most complete brief is Oswald Spengler, who studies the morphology of history. In his philosophy of history synthesized from a survey of eight cultures (Indian, Mayan, Greek, Egyptian, etc.), it is held that we in the West have passed our spring and summer, are now in the autumn and inevitably must pass to the winter stage of our cultural cycle. Gone is any possibility of a Renascence: we have had ours, and are now in the megalopolitan "civilization" phase, committed to technology, destined for more huge wars, the uprising of untutored hordes, and the coming of dictators. The arts will perish as important influences.

Spengler has popularized the notion of the decline of the western world, but after all it remains just a notion to most people. Very few are really convinced to the marrow that European and American civilization is on a downward slope. Some say it is, but they merely say it: some think so, but merely think it. To find a man who is saturated with pessimism about our present and future state is almost as rare as to find a Rosicrucian in contemporary intellectual society. Our general tone is optimistic and conceited with only an occasional breakdown when we focus on some particular spot and admit that it is unhealthy now and likely to get worse. But we cannot grant that certain epochs in the past were greater than our own: we cannot get it out of our heads that we are an improvement on all previous generations: we cannot shed our faith in progress and see our whole civilization as a retrogression.

The chief exceptions are Paul E. More and Irving Bab-

bitt. They differ from Spengler in being much more cautious generalizers: they talk about one culture only, and chiefly the last four hundred years of that. They do not think metaphorically about history or try to construct a science or philosophy of history. A chief point of difference is that they repudiate fatalism, admitting that we are biassed to roll down one groove of the future but not denying that other possibilities still remain open and asserting that by a great effort we may select one of these as our future. The nearest they come to writing history by analogy is to point out the similarity between Alexandrian culture and many of the phenomena of contemporary learning and to make a tentative comparison between the decadent imperialism of Rome under Tiberius or Nero and the present tendencies in the United States toward discarding standards, increasing luxury, and fomenting factional strife just as we approach the acme of power. But, generally speaking, Babbitt and More confine themselves strictly to the portrayal of psychological decay in one locality, Europe and America taken together as Western culture, during one definite span of time, the last four centuries and particularly the last two. I have remarked that they do not think metaphorically about history, yet their teaching can be concentrated in a metaphor, and perhaps without loss of subtlety gain in power of appeal.

We can go about picturing the Fall of Western Man if we adopt the Platonic truism that society is simply a man writ large, for we are then free to figure Western society as an Atlas the Endurer who rebels against being

otherworldly, ceases to uphold the heavens, and turns this-worldly. At first his old habits of thinking and feeling persist: he has merely ceased to make effort to miraculously sustain his center of gravity outside himself in the "other world." But now his center of gravity shifts to within: he no longer stands perfectly upright, strained toward the Absolute, but leans a little toward this earth. As he now thinks, the heavens did not all these centuries really need his support; he was deceived by a myth, he thinks, and it does not occur to him that he was the one who benefited by his posture and effort. As he leans toward the earth, he rejoices in his freedom to lean. This is the end of the Renascence. Well in the past now is the era of Gothic cathedral building which showed what incomparable architecture Atlas was capable of when he held up the heavens. Well past, too, are many other strangely beautiful things, among them "La Gaya Scienza" of the Provençal culture. From now on a new order of behavior, and it is at this turning-point that More and Babbitt begin closely to observe Atlas. What they see is a gradually shifting and settling of the center of gravity of his psychology.

For a time he holds himself almost upright. He cultivates *sprezzatura.* He is the seventeenth century gentleman and scholar who does not pride himself on anything. He *fears* specialization and believes that "perfected good-breeding consists in having no particular mark of any profession, but a general elegance of manners." But he sways a little: a slight turn and he is neo-classical and becomes stiff, conventional, puristic, the center of his

gravity in his mind. He has begun to totter in the direction he leans—toward the earth.

Then More and Babbitt observe how the giant makes a violent effort to right himself. It is the romantic recoil from the neo-classical aridity. It is Rousseau and his followers raving against trying to put one's gravity-center outside oneself, or against trying to keep it established inside oneself in the mind. Slowly the center changes, then drops suddenly into the emotions. Atlas becomes fiery. He is a Jacobin. He sets up democracies wherein popular feeling may sweep more freely. He colors philosophy with subjectivism: henceforward it is not the drama of the universe but the inward drama of the psyche that he ruminates upon. He institutes rebellion in the arts, confusing them, and he chases like a madman after sensation. The phenomena of his new state—his predilection for idyllic dreams, his praise of spontaneity and idiosyncrasy, his love of delicious revery, his dislike of discipline, etc.—grow countless. Atlas is ruled by his feelings, and they are not counterweighted by his mind. Whole parts and functions of his psychology are going to rust, most disastrously of all his will. No wonder he sprawls forward on all fours. With his center of gravity in his unbridled feelings, he must fall.

But now is his center sinking again? Will Atlas, no longer the Endurer, be changed into a cunning savage? Will he become simply a creature who exploits the earth's resources and alternates his labors in production with a complete spineless subsidence into physical comforts? Is the day of Apeneck Sweeney and Molly Bloom dawn-

ing on a culture that has known the sardonic Swift and the charm of Madame de Sévigné? Atlas who used magnificently to bear up the sky—is he to be stretched prone in comfort in the twenty-first century, no vulture tearing at his flesh as at his brother Prometheus, but a radio to lull his mind?

The signs are plentiful of another transition: we have gone from the dominance of religious values to the dominance of intellectual ones and then to the primacy of emotional values. The last stage—barbarism—will occur with the complete triumph of practical and instinctive values. Then Atlas will indeed be but an economic creature, cleverly producing what he needs by the least effort, and spending his increased leisure in the pursuit of cheap distractions from thought and serious emotion. He will truly have diminished to the ninth part of a human being.

Such, in a picture, is my reading of the critique of Western civilization so elaborately and weightily presented by Babbitt and More. They have traced the movements of our psychological center of gravity and view with foreboding the future of a society whose members will not make the almost impossible struggle to elevate its center, to resume the former standing posture of Atlas. But this simplification should be followed at once by a warning to the reader who has not consulted the whole body of works by Babbitt and More. Do not surmise they have trimmed to a thesis. They have been the patient collectors of historical evidence, and the thesis emerges from a study of all the gatherable evidence. "By their

fruits ye shall know them," is Babbitt's working rule. Secondly, do not think that the evidence, while susceptible of simplification in the mass, is in detail simple. Man is as prolific in ideas as Nature is prolific in insects (unfortunately, most ideas are of the insect order): he is a being as full of desires as an egg is full of meat (and his shell has been broken): he is as active and restless as a monkey (and about as purposeless). Consequently, his mental, emotional and instinctive manifestations are variegated in the extreme. Variegated, but not pure chaos, not without a pattern. Babbitt and More are pattern-perceivers, not imposers of arbitrary patterns. In the third place, do not think that all value is denied to romanticism and naturalism. They have in fact many good elements, which More and Babbitt fully recognize. What is bad about these schools is their rejection of the more human elements in our psychology, what is bad is their glorification of a lowered center of gravity.

The New Humanist, as any one knows who is acquainted with his mind, does not wish to turn the clock back but to incorporate the gains of romanticism and naturalism into a broader synthesis with a more stable center.

A few people can take seriously the question of the degeneration of our civilization. If you are one of these, prepared to admit seriously the possibility that the species of mankind may over long periods fall and rise in quality, then you are likely to reflect seriously on all the questions that American Humanists find of the first rank and inter-

est. If you approach these questions with the same intent sobriety with which they are propounded, then you will find a dilemma confronting you. At one horn there is Naturalism: at the other—Humanism. The statement signalizes a change in this book: up to now it has been an interpretation of American Humanism, from now on it will be a criticism. It is plain that I find the naturalistic horn no horn to grasp. Its disadvantages have been too forcibly presented by the writers grouped around Babbitt and More. On the other hand, we would have to thank their opponents had they revealed with equal skill and force the drawbacks and dangers attached to the alternative horn, but I cannot feel that the anti-Humanists have done their business satisfactorily to date. They have been rather living examples of the fallacies and partialities exposed by the New Humanists than the exposers of the latter's weaknesses. The reason is that almost to a man the anti-Humanists were not seriously and fundamentally interested in the questions put in the foreground by the Humanists. They saw no dilemma, because in the absence of serious and passionate concern over the main issues, there is no dilemma.

What is there new that the young chips from the old block of rationalism can tell us? The limitations of nineteenth century rationalism have been established for some time: years ago we cashed all its cheques and its account has not been replenished. Likewise the humanitarian's credit since the Great War has been low. He may tell us now that the problem of the will is unreal and the business of improving the environment of man will grad-

ually solve the problem of human happiness, but we are not living in the hopeful spring of 1914. We do not see man any longer in a rosy light. It is the same with the æsthete: he too is a pre-war creature. Representatives of all these types were huddled together in the symposium, *The Critique of Humanism,* and there carried on the old warfare of the allied Romanticists and Naturalists against the Humanists. But that war has been fought to a finish, and it is tiresome not to have some new developments. Also it appears we have come down a long way from the days of Shelley and Coleridge, of Darwin and Spencer, of Flaubert and Zola who did indeed make Naturalism and Romanticism *something* to argue about. We are down now to the intellectual nursery—to the childish quarrelsomeness of a Burton Rascoe and the peevish complaints of an Edmund Wilson (whose excursion, by the way, into the criticism of Sophocles deserves a mirthful place in the memory of the *cognoscenti*).

We wish however to take the anti-Humanist attack at its high point, not at its feeblest, and the acclamation of reviewers nominates the piece by Lewis Mumford, *Toward an Organic Humanism,* as the best to be had. The essay produces a glow in the reader, as Mumford almost always succeeds in doing, but when the glow fades and the substance is coolly inspected, the keen reader is bound to feel that he has been cheated by the author's cheerfulness. There is no originality of thought. The usual contention that the American Humanists cut themselves off from contemporary life. The usual contention that they are too negative. The usual misinterpretation of "the

inner check." The air of an enthusiastic master unveiling the secrets of "organic humanism." And the secrets? They appear rather banal, vague, inconclusive. Life is a "multitude of functions": we must live in a state of tension and grow and renew ourselves: we must reconcile almost everything in sight. "The world is so full of a number of things, I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings." At the end the essayist generously offers a big bed wherein he assures us romanticist and classicist, Humanist and mechanist, naturalist and idealist, divested of their philosophical clothes, can lie down happily together. I am not convinced that we can progress very far by the method of obliterating intellectual distinctions which discriminating men have labored to erect. If this piece by Mumford is the best anti-Humanist criticism, it looks as though there was nothing to do but to set out from here to plough a fresh furrow. Let me hope it will not be a lonely furrow as well.

It is, from my viewpoint, necessary to make an almost clean discard of all the current adverse criticism of the New Humanists recently committed by American writers. I would myself give away all of it to the needy poor in intellectual circles for the few lines written years ago by A. R. Orage on Paul Elmer More's *The Drift of Romanticism*. "Mr. More," he said, "has also, it appears to me, the defect of orthodoxy—he fails to realize the inevitability of heterodoxy and the consequent necessity of paradoxy. The classic is for him, as it is for me, the perfect literary form: all form, in fact, is classic. But the romantic should be recognized, when it arises, as a challenge to

form, as an impulse demanding severer forms to contain it." This, praise be given, does take a step towards a new criticism of orthodox classicism. It does not rest on mere dissatisfaction with the emotional side of American Humanism, a dissatisfaction that is so widespread there must be something to it, but it actually points out the defect. What is more, it suggests a way to overcome the defect, and that not by denying the distinctions involved but by incorporating them into a paradoxy. It challenges the student to make an entirely new approach to an old controversy.

Orage, it should be noted, has always been profoundly interested in such questions as the American Humanists now raise anew: the quality of modern society and the quality of the modern individual, the art of life and a technique for practicing it, the nature of man and his need for regeneration, moral responsibility and how to attain it, the contraction of men into specialists and the way unto Renascence fulness of experience. Without profound interest in questions of this nature, there is no dilemma to be produced, and no need for a paradoxical attitude to face it.

With that recognized, let us now press forward to grips with the New Humanism.

Twentieth century Humanism undeniably has an appeal for the liberated man or woman. Of course, I do not mean liberated in any absolute sense, but use the word in its present conversational meaning to signify those who have freed themselves of popular delusions. I mean just

that civilized minority that do not need the offices of H. L. Mencken to open their eyes to current cant. They are, to be brief, total disbelievers in the so-called "American Credo." It is not easy to shock them about sex. They have learned to view many of the facts of life realistically. They are of a questioning turn of mind. They prefer sophistication to godliness. Generalizing, we can say they have shed two classes of superstitions, the superstitions that have usurped the place of ancient religion and the superstitions that flourish in the neighborhood of modern science. They do not believe, that is, that either the churches or the scientists "can fix everything up." Emancipated from the official Christianity of our day, disillusioned about the day's science, they experiment and drift in a middle region, an amorphous group, curious about the possibilities of life but skeptical of finding a pansophy.

In the last decade and a half in America they veered toward naturalism and now know what awaits them in that quarter. Romantic disillusionment—disheartened optimism—the modern distemper so eloquently confessed for our generation by Joseph Wood Krutch. Now apparently a vanguard is veering toward Humanism. And so far one can distinguish two main types among this advance guard—those who have the humanistic temper by nature and those who are naturally of a religious inclination.

What the humanistic temper is this book has sought to make clear. I will add now one further example and one more description of the temper. The example is the poet Robert Frost who in all probability holds no formal views

on American Humanism, and perhaps is largely unacquainted with the ideas of Babbitt and More, but who nevertheless writes verse highly satisfactory by humanistic criteria. An intimate understanding of this poet's psychology *through* his works will give you better than reams of exposition what the actual flavor and humor and clear-cut quality of humanistic experience is like. The description of the humanistic temper is by Robert Shafer. Writing in the *Hound and Horn,* Summer Issue, 1930, Shafer said: "The true humanist has ever been a practical man of the world; avoiding those tempting chimeras metaphysical speculation and pseudo-science; suspicious of rigid abstract formulations; preferring to define his position tentatively, by the methods of critical scrutiny, in close and fruitful relation to actual but ever-changing circumstances; avoiding the self-defeating violence of revolution; preferring to work with and through existing institutions; sacrificing sudden impressiveness to steady, quiet persistence; not expectant of victory; and content even with apparent defeat in untoward times if apparent defeat is the reward of moderation, sane judgment, disciplined taste, and a comely serenity."

As for the liberated who are religiously inclined, who have, that is, the religious temperament, they are quite easy to describe. I refer simply to intelligent civilized men and women who are accessible to ideas of a religious order, who are prepared to entertain but only to entertain religious assumptions, who experience a little thrill from the (to us) occult language of the Sacred Books. I mean

no more than that: it amounts to a kind of sympathetic curiosity in religious matters.

Now, forsaking the liberated for a while, I have to consider something very unusual in contemporary experience—*the religious spirit.*

The difficulties in the way of conveying a fresh sense of this spirit are almost insuperable. I cannot begin as Norman Foerster and other Humanists do by professing respect and admiration for the great organized religious bodies in their present condition, for the thing I attach value to is the religious spirit and that has departed. I agree with Hulme and other scattered observers that the present age totally misunderstands religion. Warm ashes of the Christian Faith remain, most notably in Catholicism, but we moderns are almost hopelessly clogged with false associations, sentimentalities, stock responses to religion, and nothing very potent in us can be lit up by the feeble glow cast by the best surviving elements in the Churches. So thick is the forest of our associations about religion, so lost and wandering are we in it, that I shall scrupulously avoid citing any historic examples of the religious spirit: that would in all likelihood lead simply to tangential arguments, to treading in the mazes of our associations about figures. Whereas it is the essence itself, this spirit so foreign to our ways, that I would suggest. Without a prior common understanding, examples may in fact be pernicious.

Try then, my reader, as I have tried, to throw out of the mind all our stale notions about the spirit of the religious man. Realize as strongly as possible the non-

religious motives that have entered into modern Christian thought, making the "religious life" what Whitehead protests it should not be, a research after comfort. Put to a violent death the democratic feelings that have been allowed to corrupt the uncompromising character of religions at their source. To go on in the hortatory way,—shock your preconceptions one by one. Be prepared to admit that a genuinely religious man would seem monstrous to you.

As I conceive of the religious spirit, neither the religious inclination nor the humanistic temper approximate to it in the least degree. There is an absolute difference. They do not grow into the religious spirit, but must suffer a transformation. My emphatic judgment is that Humanism can never merge into religion by a mere extension of itself, but that there exists a chasm between the two which the New Humanist *qua* Humanist can never leap. Religious and humanistic inclinations can make terms with each other, but between the religious spirit and the humanistic temper there is opposition forever. I point to the *early* Christians who insisted, as Babbitt notes, that there is only a stark supernaturalism and a stark naturalism with no intermediate territory for the Humanist.

Briefly now I will essay a probably futile task, the adumbration of the man of religious spirit. Probably futile, because he is incredible to us. We cannot credit such a passion for perfection as he incarnates. To us religion is anthropomorphic: to him religion is theomorphic. In that you have the astounding reversal of our suppositions which he makes. Consequently when we read, "So God

created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him," we at once think of God as being like man: the religious spirit, however, thinks of man as being like God, an utterly revolutionary difference, for, since man in his ordinary condition is obviously anything but Godlike, this theomorphism stimulates in the religious spirit the tremendous ambition to become like God, a perfect being. Could there be anything more rash and sublime and impossible? Provided one has shed sentimental conceptions of deity. "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect." Every resource must be used, every power must be strained, every second of life must be taken for the impossible task. The mind is an instrument of perfection: it must accordingly be developed to the utmost. The body must be strong to undertake the enormous labors imposed on it. The emotions must be unbelievably enriched. Consciousness itself must expand! Religion is indefeasibly the study and pursuit of perfection: it requires not only that no stone but no grain and no mountain be left unturned which might furnish a clue or a stimulus to its quest. This, in its desperateness, its consuming thirst, its impossibilism, is almost as remote, I need not say, from Humanism as it is from Naturalism. To the religious spirit it is the absolute or nothing.

Absolute Truth, absolute Beauty, absolute Goodness—these are what he yearns for, and he is impatient of moderation, decency, good sense *as ends*. He cannot, as the Humanist can, seek primarily for stability of character: he seeks for perfection of character with stability coming as a by-product. Nor is there any known limit to his skep-

ticism: the very nature of his pursuit of the unattainable enforces skepticism on him to the last degree. The religious life is a continual destruction of those elements of imperfection, illusions. "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

Obviously, such men as I speak of are extremely uncommon. Their mark, I have tried to suggest, is that they make their life-task the wholehearted, single-minded pursuit of a perfection whose fulness we cannot even dream of, and to which we are quite indifferent as an idea. They have in our era another mark that differentiates them from us as completely as if they belonged to another race: an agony of bafflement. In Biblical language, they have "a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." Their zeal leads them everywhere, they stop at nothing, but the form of their life in modern times is a searching, not a finding. Zealous searchers, they are blocked by that "middle wall of partition" spoken of in the Bible which they know not how to break down. They see in their quest the need for an enlargement of their powers, but how to increase them, that they do not know. Theirs is the agony of baffled search for the means to the perfection they crave with all their being. They would seem to know in terms of the most exasperating personal experience that there does exist a radical discontinuity, as Hulme thought, between man and God or the Absolute. The Humanist we have seen dwelling on the discontinuity between man and nature. The religious spirit discovers in his efforts toward self-perfecting, toward expansion and intensification of consciousness, the discontinuity at

the other border, and it is this frontier between man and the absolute that he emphasizes. Here, he says, is the all-important barrier, and we cannot rest until we have leaped it.

Thirst for divinizing oneself, agony of frustration before the "middle partition"—these are at all times the stigmata of a few men on our planet. We can *recognize* these stigmata even though what they signify lies outside our experience, but because we have not experienced, we cannot *comprehend*. Yet if one is interested in human limits, one has to make a rude stab at description of this race of men. Have you never heard that in the original doctrine of no single great religion is it stated that man by nature has a soul? Then blame religious democracy. Man in the great religions at their source is exhorted to labor for a soul, is urged to acquire one, but religion says he begins without one. Religion begins with stark naturalism, but ends with constructing a bridge to a new life. Many are called to the work of creating the new life—in that respect religion is democratic; but few are chosen, few succeed in "crossing the stream"—an unpalatable saying to religious democrats. This brings forward an idea that pales the humanistic notion of a turning away from the natural self, just as the idea of the divinization of man pales the idea of the humanization of man. The religious spirit darkens naturalism far beyond the Humanist portrayal, and at the same time it gives the possibilities of man an effulgence that drowns with glory the modest conceptions of the Humanists. The connecting idea brought forward is rebirth by a process as definite but

far more terrific than physical birth. This is an idea still present, as we noted, in Pico della Mirandola's *Oration,* but since vanished from humanistic teaching.

The suffering of the religious spirit today, however, comes not, I venture to say, from the pangs of rebirth but from non-satisfaction. He cannot conceive a soul and therefore cannot gestate one. No wonder a modern religious spirit occasionally shatters itself in madness! The zeal of God, but not according to knowledge, is fraught with the utmost danger, for the truth of our human situation we are told is terror-inspiring, and a sudden glimpse—

We have done with the armchair mysticism prevalent in the West today. It is devoid of the desperation, the readiness to leave the library and the round of civilized comforts and take all the risks, the sheer heroism that mark the genuine religious man. It clearly has naught of the spirit of these Buddhistic verses.

> Scorched, frozen, and alone,
> In fearsome forest dwelling,
> Naked, no fire to warm,
> Bent on the quest is the Sage.

The distinction is not, please mark however, between comfortable literary mysticism and self-torturing asceticism. Great religious teachers have pointed out the fallacy of the latter as the Way. Our distinction is between the unwillingness to experiment dangerously with life and the resolute disposition of the genuinely religious to go to any lengths, if necessary.

And now we may come back to ourselves, the liberated,

who have been illuminated by the steady light thrown on Naturalism by the New Humanists and have afterwards turned to examine critically Humanism itself. By the blazing light shafted on it from the religious spirit, what do we now see there? Holding Humanism up against this searching sun-like radiance, shall we find ourselves in an unexpected dilemma?

It is patent that a man aflame with the religious spirit would, when striking on the New Humanism in his investigations, formulate his requirements of it and the aims he wished it to satisfy in a language the contemporary Humanist does not speak. But we who call ourselves the liberated employ, so it happens, a vocabulary keyed a note above characteristic Humanist speech. The New Humanist's favorite words are: decency, moderation, measure, commonsense, the normal and representative, the centralized, discipline, standards, humility, self-control, vital restraint, proportionateness, decorum, stability. His thoughts circulate around these words: they constitute the magnetic portion of his vocabulary. The magnetic portion of the liberated man's vocabulary runs somewhat as follows, and you will note the higher keying at once: honesty, daring, curiosity, experiment, zeal for truth, self-knowledge, disinterestedness, harmony, the free mind, spiritual freedom, integration of experience, art of life, increased life, greater consciousness. The respective vocabularies are not mutually exclusive; there is much overlapping in actual usage. But the point is sound that the New Humanist is apt to employ the second set of terms

in the second place, whereas the liberated man approaching the study of Humanism uses the Humanist's favorite words as secondary to the magnetic words of freedom, increased consciousness, etc. This difference in emphasis gives us a clue that may conduct to an important criticism of the New Humanist's supreme method, the rule of mediation.

In approaching any subject, it is well to formulate in advance where one stands at present, what motives impel one toward the new subject, what one expects to find, and what one wants to discover. The liberated man (common gender) has, in theory at least, been freed from dogma, either naturalistic or theological. Dogma to him is any statement offered which may be true but which is unaccompanied by a means of verifying it. He has grown clever in distinguishing between what is verifiable by himself and what is not: the latter he calls "dogma." In theory also he is freed from hypocrisy: he strives to be completely honest with himself. His objection to most conventional modes of thought is that they have hampered him in getting at the truth about himself. Today he is discovering that truth, and it is, that he is completely self-ignorant. Hear him confess his ignorance, as he is doing in increasing numbers.

"I perceive my own ignorance on all essential matters. Why I exist I do not know. What I am I do not know. I am ignorant of any purpose in life. My friends and especially my enemies are more aware of my weaknesses than I am. My economy of life is bad—I do not make the most of it, or know how to do so. I am subject to

unknown laws. Blind to the future, forgetful of my past, in the present I exist, because of my ignorance, as the plaything of chance."

The discovery of the liberated man is that he is not a fallen Angel but a feeble son of Man. On the basis of his ignorance, however, he can and does formulate what he wishes to know and what abilities he wishes to acquire. One word sums up the first:—Self-Knowledge. "I would like to know what sort of creature I really am. What are my real wishes? Why do I live and for what end? What are the conditions of happiness? How may I live with real advantage to myself? What is the true nature of the world that impinges on me? In short, I would like to know everything about myself from my puzzling trivial habits to my relation with the universe."

As for Ability, he would, in my view, like to be a Reynard the Fox, the "animal capable." He wishes to be active, to become valuable and therefore valued by men, to be devoid of humbug in the use of his skill and single-minded in what he undertakes, above all to succeed wherever he is. The power to do what he wishes to do!

But not one word about character. We have a confession of ignorance followed by the recognition of a need for self-knowledge and the need for general ability. Perhaps the intuition of the liberated person tells him that character is a resultant, the product of his knowledge and his ability interacting. With his needs uppermost in his mind, he encounters the New Humanism and this system, as we have learned, puts character foremost. The juxtaposition gives us another critical clue. For the Hu-

manist replies first to the very last questions—*the still unformulated questions*—of the liberated, and the first questions of the liberated are relegated in humanistic thought to a lesser position. Which order is correct?

Are we close to the nub at last? Several years ago in an essay on Irving Babbitt I closed by saying that the crux of the whole matter of Humanism was in the questions: "To what ends in human character does the technique of Humanism surely lead? Can it by its route attain to the victory over circumstance announced by religion or can it only ameliorate a determined scheme of things by the production of such relatively minor virtues as moderation, decency and good sense?" These questions seem to me now as then to touch the central issue. The technique of Humanism is mediation: the law of measure, Nothing Too Much, is supreme. The validity of this law I do not question. Whether it is always and everywhere to be observed, that I question. What I specifically challenge is the supremacy of the technique based on the law of measure. Is mediation the prime law of life?

My answer must be, No.* I cannot set aside the fact that mediation presupposes two things, the acquisition of self-knowledge and the acquisition of will. *It is a technique of control.* By trying to practice it some self-knowledge is picked up incidentally, and a call is made upon the will to awake. But mediation is primarily concerned with character, not with knowledge, not with development of will. A prior method is absolutely required if mediation

* It may interest some readers to know that this is why consistently throughout my writing career I have refused to classify myself as a New Humanist despite my manifestly strong sympathy for the school.

is to yield any great results and that prior method is necessarily supreme. To be blunt and homely, the New Humanist has overlooked the horse which is to pull his cart: he has overlooked the working out of a trustworthy technique for learning the exact truth about the individual creature who is to be disciplined by mediation to a norm of humanity. For me then, and very possibly for many other liberated men and women, the New Humanism is too "advanced." We stand at the beginning: we are pupils who have first to learn how to attain a better working knowledge of what some day we may hope to control. We are willing to admit the mediatory method as one of a group of allied methods, but we cannot isolate it as the leading and one essential means to self-development.

I have some hopes of making this point clear. It is not a destructive criticism. I would not myself take the trouble to write a whole book simply to overthrow something. It is, however, a criticism of incompleteness and misplaced emphasis, and by no means implies the discarding of the law of measure. The aim is to advance the contribution of American Humanism nearer to a *total* solution of the modern problem. And I consider that an advance is made by pointing out the absence in Humanism of a technique for self-knowledge and will-development that at all compares in precision and plausibility with its technique for control.

Suppose a man is today converted to the philosophy of Rousseau. He finds his conversion need not be simply a literary one, so to speak, for associated with the philosophy there is now a psychological technique alleged to

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corroborate the rightness of Rousseauistic ideas. The new convert can study psycho-analysis, undergo treatment in an analyst's office, emerge with a rather elaborate method for interpreting his own psychology. He has, along with his philosophy, an apparent means for verifying it, for living up to it. He is possessed of a technique based on Rousseauistic principles which, it is claimed, provides a continuous key to self-knowledge. It is hardly necessary for me to add, however, that psycho-analysis is a discredited technique for self-knowledge, and that there exists today no advertised, easily accessible, tested, thoroughly accredited way to carry out the Pythagorean command, Know Thyself. The illustration serves all the same to point the fact that the New Humanism is unequipped with a psychological technique for taking the first step. It has to rely on introspection which notoriously is unreliable. But it relies too on traditional knowledge, and this is to a certain degree a corrective of introspective vagaries. For ancient wisdom—in India, in Egypt, in Pythagorean Greece, in Palestine—may have been founded on realities and methods to which we have lost the clue. There are good grounds for surmising that Pythagoras, for example, was not a fanciful guesser at all. The New Humanists being in contact with the best knowledge of the past may therefore be right in their ideas, but we and they need to remember that the complete technique for validating these ideas in terms of concrete individual experience is still to find or perhaps rediscover.

Another difficulty I have always had with the New Humanism arises over the Will. In theory I concede the Humanists are right, but it is a question whether in their practice the Will becomes an accomplished fact. What is the sure test? We make effort—that we know; and furthermore effort occurs in the prescribed field of working on oneself. Will is psychological effort distinguished from physical effort. But is all psychological effort to be called Willing? Remember that psychological effort appears always to be powerfully motived: by self-interest, fear, rivalry, desire for fame, intellectual curiosity, a hundred varying motives. When the motive dies, the effort invariably dies with it. Now just as I cannot grant that a man with an empty belly who labors like a Trojan for his next meal is an example of Will, so I cannot accept the man laboring great hours to satisfy intellectual hunger as an instance of Willing. Will must occur in the absence of incentive. Will would persist in working in a given direction *after* the motive had ceased. Will is that which overcomes indifference.

I hold that we cannot be too skeptical on this topic. Nowhere else does illusion insinuate itself so much as in regard to responsible choice and Will. How can we make sure that we are not subtly deluded?

"Freedom is the will to be responsible for oneself"—this is one of Nietzsche's profoundest sayings. Certainly we all have a desire to be responsible for ourselves. But it is equally certain that the desire is comparatively weak, buried most of the time, intermittent in appearance, quickly exhausted when it does appear. Clearly, we do

not get very far on our occasional desires for self-responsibility. Our tendencies flow the other way: we delight in irresponsibility. All the odds experience demonstrates are against any continuous effort at being responsible for oneself. My conclusion is that Will is just that continuous effort carried on against the whole weight of the organism, an effort that is finally unaided by wishes and unprovoked by external inducements—nothing less than an *independent* activity of the psyche.

The practical conclusion I must draw from this is that men are Will-less. The conclusion that I am not warranted in drawing in the face of extraordinary past testimony is that men are devoid of the potentiality of Will. "Thou art not free yet, thou seekest freedom still"—this is Nietzsche again, and freedom must be sought in human potentialities and won by the actualization of potentials, since as we actually are, we are not free. The New Humanist has confused a potentiality, the Will, with an actuality that can be described as *conditioned* psychological effort directed toward self-control. I attach much weight to that criticism.

It seems to me of great consequence to realize this:—it is "failure of will" we know, not acts of Will. The testimony of a therapeutist strikingly confirms what I have just said. Therapeutists often find that their patients want to get well, know what the trouble is and what they must do, and yet fail to exert the required will. In an unusually candid paper read some years ago before the Medical Section of the British Psychological Society Dr. James Carruthers Young, formerly a surgeon, now a prac-

titioner of the Jung school of analytic psychology, made the following remarks which succeed in putting the problem of the Will on a practical basis. "Every form of occultism aims at self-development through deepening, or expanding the limits of, self-consciousness, or however you like to express it. Now it is obvious that this laudable object cannot be attained merely by embracing the ideas of a system, however rapturously. The all-important factor of the exercise and proper application of will must enter, if anything is to be achieved. If it does not, then the ideas, however beautiful and intriguing, in the end become merely 'dope' . . . it seemed to me that 'failure of will' was *the bête noire* in neuroses. Roughly, the neurotic symptom from the Freudian standpoint is the disguised expression of an affect which is too painful to be *faced*. From the Adlerian standpoint, it is an 'incomparable arrangement,' by which the patient avoids *facing* a certain aspect of what we call reality. In the broadest sense in both systems, it is a question of failure to *face up* to reality. Now it by no means follows that, when it is made clear to the patient by analysis what aspects of reality he has been unconsciously avoiding, that he will at once be able to cope with it. This is particularly evident in the case of obsessionists, as I have proved to my own satisfaction again and again. A washing obsessionist, for example, cheerfully subscribes to the theory of origin of her washing, but when called upon to make the slightest new adaptation, always falls back on her washing. In effect she says: 'I cannot marry, or do this, that or the other, because, you see, I wash.' To put the matter in a

nutshell, analytical knowledge is not necessarily effective knowledge.

"Now I think it will be generally agreed that what I have called 'failure of will' is often bound up with an endocrine deficiency or dyscrasia, sometimes acquired and sometimes apparently so fundamental as to justify the term 'primary plasmic insufficiency,' which corresponds to Adler's organic inferiority. Unfortunately, the science of endocrinology was not, and is not yet, so far advanced as to enable us to remedy such dyscrasias with anything approaching to certainty or precision, even granted that our powers of diagnosis may be able to divine the true nature of such complicated conditions. My problem, then, was how to overcome the difficulty of 'failure of will' by means of a definite psychological method."

It seems to me no less important for the Humanists to realize that *there* is the problem for the ordinary person as well as for the pathological, namely, how to reinforce a sound theory of the Will with a sound method for overcoming 'failure of will.' To vanquish the obstinate difficulties, the theory must become practical.

The dilemma turns out to be like this:—pursue your natural desires and you find they do not lead to that signal of well-being we call happiness but reveal instead the need for a re-education of desire, so that you may train yourself to desire the kind of happiness that is possible for men; choose Humanism as a system of re-education of desire and you must wonder if it has the strength to perform the task. One alternative deceives you by its bright appeal,

the other seems inferior in its call to the imagination, to the hidden latent powers of psychology. But inferior to what? Inferior to religion at its purest. Religion says it is a superhuman task to overcome one's naturalism. If it is a superhuman undertaking, then one may ask, what chance is there of effecting a real mastery by anything less than a science for divinizing man?

For here is man, the prey of innumerable illusions, stunted in psychological growth, spiritually inert, bewildered by himself, discordant in behavior, perhaps incurably paralyzed in will—will anything but the most tremendous means metamorphose him into a falconer of reality, an experiencer of bliss and ecstasy, a doer of deeds on the fighting edge of the cosmos? The New Humanism is a morality not untouched by dignified emotion. But I say that on the whole it is morals not sufficiently touched with poetry, not endowed with the tremendous shaking appeal to our whole being that religion has been known to exercise. Religion is more than Arnold defined it, it includes morality touched by emotion, but it includes art, science, philosophy as well. It is insatiable for perfection and so must quicken and recharge every side of our consciousness. It is, I think, properly impatient of all half-measures everywhere, impatient of such a reason as Babbitt gives, the fear of self-delusion, for choosing a more moderate attack on life's riddles, impatient of short aims—*because it realizes the almost hopeless condition of man.* For psychological freedom everything must be risked. That is what we learn when we study the religious spirit. By its fiery light, we liberated ones per-

ceive that we are in truth only pseudo-liberated. We have put the weight on being free from something, but the real question is, free for what? I have been writing, quite knowingly, about the dilemma of the *pseudo-liberated*. If we realize our pseudo-state, then as we approach the New Humanism, our question becomes a searching one, will it truly liberate? My suggestion has been to hold this system up against the blazing background of the religious spirit, and against that background it seems certain to me two major defects appear in Humanism: the lack of a science of self-study and a not sufficiently stringent conception of the Will.

Might we not say that twentieth century Humanism is a system of right conjectures? "Do you not perceive," the prophetess Diotima says to Socrates in *The Banquet,* "that there is something between ignorance and wisdom?" "What is that?" asked Socrates. "To have a right opinion or conjecture. Observe, that this kind of opinion, for which no reason can be rendered, cannot be called knowledge; for how can that be called knowledge, which is without evidence or reason? Nor ignorance, on the other hand; for how can that be called ignorance which arrives at the persuasion of that which it really is? A right opinion is something between understanding and ignorance." Humanism to me has the value, and it is a high value, of wise conjecture about the way to lead a human life. For undoubtedly it is better, in default of wisdom, to be guided by true opinions than by demonstrably false ones. But we must not lose sight of the conjectural basis of Humanism. We must throw ourselves

into the task of validating to the point of indisputability the right opinions involved. The New Humanist draws upon the Sages: his business is to become a Sage, to achieve in his own person the sensation of absolute knowledge, to go beyond the intermediate stage to wisdom.

Can he do so without hitching his wagon to a more remote star? I think not. There is the effort to be superman, not to be solely identified of course with the peculiar effort of one man, Nietzsche, and this effort while failing to reach its end does leave as a by-product a growth in human-ness. But the less ambitious effort to be human—does it hit the mark? Superhumanism gives birth to the human, or humanism with the small h. It is claimed that Humanism gives birth to the human, too, but must we not qualify that somewhat in our final chapter?

XII

THE END OF THE TETHER

"It is time for man to mark out his goal, to plant the germ of his highest hopes. His soil is still rich enough for that purpose."—FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE.

IT is not only in politics that the advice to use large scale maps is excellent. If one refers daily "crises" to a big map, one is far less likely to fly into political hysteria over trifling remote events: one thinks politically in terms commensurate with the planet, not of one corner of it distant only a few inches on the small map from the other side of the world. But one requires also, and even more, a large scale map of life as a preventive of petty thoughts. We need to refer such questions as closed the preceding chapter to a map of life that will enlarge our mental activities in trying to reply to them. The main trouble with the cult of contemporaneity is that it has lost the sense of greatness and spaciousness. Its map is a crude child's drawing—a large out-of-proportion area across which is scrawled, "Here Be the Moderns," and outlying this are indeterminate shadowy regions peopled by lesser beings, dwarfs, and cavemen—our forerunners. History to the one-sided enthusiasts for the contemporaneous is really Aunt Polly's Story of Mankind which I sometimes think Donald Ogden Stewart has immortalized: it is a series of steps forward from ancient Egypt to the great

and glorious present, a progress culminating in Darwin, Freud, Joyce and Proust, Ford and Lenin, Stravinsky and Bertrand Russell, and a host of other recently elected candidates for the New Olympus. It will not do to use so disproportioned and confined a map in measuring the work of Babbitt and More who have plotted out their intellectual campaign on a larger scale than we are accustomed to. We must relate their work to very extensive perspectives: we must find some scale for the greatness of the ages. How else can we measure the truly human and the superhuman? For the superhuman covers all that man may be the bridge to: the truly human covers the bridge, the whole transition itself. The American Humanist makes the bridge the end. But can he build it unless the struggle is to reach the other shore, to cross the discontinuity, the gulf between Man and the Absolute? The superhumanist treats the bridge as means for prospective travel. An unsuccessful traveller, he yet may go further in completing the bridge than the Humanist who thinks only of bridge-building.

The map of life I shall avail myself of was drawn by a genius at the age of twenty-eight, a genius of whom the leading New Humanists do not share my high opinion. But that discrepancy I choose to think arises from the defect of orthodoxy. To Paul Elmer More, for example, *The Birth of Tragedy* by Friedrich Nietzsche merely makes a distinction in the classical world that "takes the form of a harsh and unreal contrast between the Dionysian principle of unrest and growth and creation for which he expresses the highest regard and the Apollonian principle

of rest and renunciation and contraction for which, as Platonism, he has the deepest aversion." But for me *The Birth of Tragedy* is a profound and terrific document by which we may get the most vivid impression of the deterioration of modern life, classify the New Humanists as socratic or theoretical men, and learn what we must try to do with the new situation in American culture created by the advent of Humanism. The book had extravagances of judgment and a fatuous hopefulness for German music which Nietzsche corrected in *Ecce Homo* but the central thesis he left unimpaired—and the modern world has left it uncomprehended.

The interpretation of Greek tragedy has been a field of bitter contention between romanticists and classicists. The romanticists see chiefly in Greek tragedy the violence, the melodrama, great horrors, headlong actions, titanic personages. The classicists see ethical imports, a background of order, superb control, religious values. From the standpoint of a student of Nietzsche both parties are right—and wrong; for Nietzsche divined a third interpretation, a paradox of understanding, whereby the romantic and the classicist views are held in solution, but the solution itself is a new conception of tragedy. Nietzsche saw in Greek tragedy the ever-renewed conflict and reconciliation of two principles, the Dionysian to which alone the romanticist is susceptible and the Apollonian which alone wins the classicist. The tragic view perceives the necessity for the mutual agonistic struggle: it is based on the realization that Apollo and Dionysus must war with each other, must continue forever in that strange

paradox, a synthesis founded on struggle. There must ever exist, if life is to ascend, a turbulent frenzied uprush of Formability, and there must coexist a constant reduction to Form.

On the one side of the world-stage you have Dionysus with his wildest music, his ecstasy and poetry, his drunkenness, his sheer states of Being. On the other side there is Apollo, the soothsayer, the god of plastic energies, the cool and comely, olympian in his dream-states. The Formable and the Formed!

There is a suffering attached to actualization, because to actualize a potentiality is to exclude other potentialities. It is to concentrate and limit. Dionysus suffers because he must pass into limitations: his great surges of impulse must eventuate in the actual phenomenal world. He is the foe of limitation, and his enemy, Apollo, must impose limits on him. As the Dionysian spirit is strong, it breaks limits and requires new and wider ones; as the Apollonian spirit is strong, it accepts the challenge and seeks ever better forms and containers.

The tragic view of Nietzsche and according to him of the Greeks too is that this struggle must be consciously intensified. The will to surpass must grapple with the will to maintenance. Liberty battles law; love, duty; change, custom; intuition, science; and inspiration battles art. But the antithesis goes deeper than these human aspects reveal, ultimately reaching energy and matter, Dionysian pure energy and Apollonian pure form. In the æsthetics of Attic tragedy Nietzsche held that the

chorus was Dionysian and the play an Apollonian projection of the dithyrambic being-states of the chorus.

But an observer of contemporary civilization in America and Europe who has had awaked in him a glimmering sense of the ancient Apollonians and Dionysians would be forced to think that the two types of men are almost extinct. How many *Moby Dicks* have there been in the last fifty years of American literature? Where are the post-Nietzscheans? On account of the pseudo-Nietzscheans whose grossness and insincerity were so glaring, no one now dares to call himself a Nietzschean, for we have learned from the pseudo-Nietzscheans how transparent the pose is, how fraudulent one is to play Nietzsche without the Dionysian flame in very truth burning within. So there are no successors to Nietzsche, no line of initiates of Dionysus. We can appreciate Nietzsche, but we cannot be Nietzscheans. Our heritage comes from Greece, but not from the Greece of the Mysteries: we are the heirs of Greek rationalism, of Greek decadence. Euripides and Socrates have turned out to be the fathers of the future.

For speaking by and large, our art is devoid of the Æschylean mystical conception and models itself on Euripides who reasoned with the Gods, not for them. His principle, says Nietzsche, was this: "To be beautiful everything must be intelligible." Accordingly he used the familiar for his substance, he brought the spectator on the stage, he introduced realism. "The mirror in which formerly only grand and bold traits were represented now showed the painful fidelity that conscientiously reproduces even the abortive outlines of nature. . . . The spectator

now actually saw and heard his double on the Euripidean stage, and rejoiced that he could talk so well." The Euripidean drama, like our plays and novels today, concerned common matters of which every one feels he is a competent judge. The audience therefore never comes to be initiated but to apply without the slightest scruples its criteria of ordinary experience. This was the betrayal of the Dionysian cause which Euripides recanted at the end of his life, but the European world has not recanted, today less than ever when a minuscule Euripides like Bernard Shaw is loaded with the highest honors.

As for Socrates, although I am utterly unable to decide on the justice of Nietzsche's portrait of the historical figure—it is the most devastating drawing of Socrates ever penned, but is it true?—that makes no matter here. Nietzsche knew to the core the long line of men descending from Socrates, and if he imagined a mythical father to fit the men he knew, we can accept the myth for its truth of portraiture of a type, if not of the individual it is named after. The Nietzschean contention is that to Socrates was denied the pleasure of gazing into the Dionysian abysses. He was therefore no more than Euripides *en rapport* with the Apollonian dream-world projected from Dionysian ecstasy. He was a disintegrating force, withdrawing the Apollonian tendency into the hard shell of logical schematism as Euripides shrunk the Dionysian state into naturalistic emotion. He liked art to cling to the trunk of dialectics, to be overgrown with philosophic thought. He had the optimism of the dialectician which Nietzsche felt is fatal to the tragic spirit.

And he was most of the time anti-musical. From him stream the theoretical men, the men of science in the broad sense, the men who get their enjoyment and satisfaction out of the cast-off veil rather than out of gazing with rapture at whatever still remains veiled after the unveiling. They care more for the search after truth than for truth itself. This Lessing, called by Nietzsche the most honest of theoretical men, boldly admitted. Finally, they are insensitive to mystery and attribute to knowledge and perception the power of a universal panacea, seeing evil itself in error.

The Birth of Tragedy gives us a sense of grand scale by which to try contemporary literature and culture. It makes it ridiculous to advance claims for Eugene O'Neill as a Dionysian—to mention an example of the sort of correction that can immediately be made. It gives us in Euripides the norm of our literary art, the decadent Greek justification of the ways of man to God. It replaces Benda's modest analysis of the plastic and musical sensibilities, remarked upon in an earlier chapter, with a majestic view of the highest contrasted principles in man. Among other things, it throws a piercing light on the twentieth century Humanists, revealing them to be theoretical or socratic men as remote from the inspired by Apollo as their romantic enemies are remote from the inspiration of Dionysus. We modern men do but whisper inaudibly of the old gods.

In support of my classifying the New Humanists as socratic men, I will bring forward two or three points. In the Dionysian-Apollonian opposition, things were rec-

onciled, brought to a dynamic equilibrium, through struggle. The principle of individuation was in strife with primordial unity. The most fertile sense of possibilities clashed with the strictest sense of limitations. But the Humanist does not speak of struggle as the means of achieving stability: he endorses mediation, the tempering of liberty by law, the selection of a middle course. This I hold is the procedure of the logical man with an undeveloped sense of tragedy. Again, the New Humanist tries to rest on what may be essentially a transitional phase of man. He concedes that the highest level of life is religious, but he does not aim to reach it. The humanistic level attracts him most, but may this attraction not be translated into a love of the search for truth rather than for truth itself—the mark of the socratic type? In the last place, it is significant that several American Humanists confess to a distrust of the art of music, *the* Dionysian art. And unlike Socrates no inner voice reminds them to their consternation, "Humanist, practice music!" There does not even linger in them as in their monumental predecessor an uneasy sense that in their philosophizing on the literary tradition they may through lack of understanding the Dionysian be sinning against a deity.

But we have to work with the elements of the contemporary situation. Just as it is idle to sit dreaming of great wealth when one has to work for bread and butter, so it is idle to sit thinking about becoming Dionysian or Apollonian when the immediate situation requires buck-

ling down to the production of humble intellectual and æsthetic fare. I have totally failed if by shrinking our valuations against a grand scale of values, I seemed to suggest taking the road to despair of the modern situation. On the contrary, we want to know where we are at and how best we may spend our energies on the sound assumption that there is a zest and a satisfaction in making the most of what we have. Since I have used Nietzsche to expand our ideas about the state of modern culture, I shall also give his word of encouragement to us: "A constant struggle against uniformly unfavorable conditions is what makes a type stable and hard." The joy of overcoming is ours to be had for work in present-day terms on the present-day condition of things: it will be our rustic fare which notoriously tastes better to those who sweat for it than to those who live in cushioned ease.

We may use conceptions of Dionysians and Apollonians for measurement, but the current actualities thus measured are socratic men (Humanists) and rebellious men (Baconians, Rousseauists—of many sub-varieties, the Baconians having a touch of socratism, the Rousseauists in their art converging toward the Euripidean standard). The demigods and satyrs do not frequent the modern stage, but there is still played across it a pseudo-Apollonian —pseudo-Dionysian warfare. *Our disaster is that the participants have lost the sense of being necessary to each other;* this vitiates all our spiritual economy.

The New Humanists are seeking to vitalize in American life the principle of concentration and stability: the New Rebels have as their task the vitalizing of the princi-

ple of expansion and flux. The changed situation brought about by the advent of American Humanism is that we now have a strong well armed party of conservation to balance and offset the reigning party of change. A true spiritual economy would require that each party should intensify its efforts, should surpass its previous productions, should grow toward greater goals by vigorous contention with the other. The rôle of the Humanist is to *contain* the age: the rôle of the rebel is to break out of the containing forms and to demand new forms for the new enlarged more powerful spirit. But actually what do we find? The total absence of spiritual economists of the sort just mentioned. No unconscious sense of a need for passing from inchoate restlessness into major forms and no need for breaking out from these forms in turn. Or perhaps I should say scarcely any, for on a few occasions in the last decade there have been laments that in American life there was no *resistance* offered to a school of ideas, nothing on which a new school could sharpen its mind. Criticism with us is mostly an affair of acclamation and denunciation, a false state of excitement in which ideas stagnate.

In the light of the economy sketched above, our recent literary history reads somewhat as follows. The revolt of the generation now in power, successfully carried out between 1915 and 1920, was against a *decadent conservatism* well named "genteelness." It savagely broke the forms of genteel prudish culture, but the forms were weak: it may be said that genteelness was no enemy at all for strong writers. Well, the now ruling Middle Genera-

tion rested on its easy laurels: there followed ten years of waxing fat and flabby for the insurgents, to be ended by the surprising challenge of a virile conservatism that had quietly grown up in the meantime. *How* they met the challenge is a matter of recent history—the jejune thought and rhinestone wit of Carl Van Doren in the debate with Irving Babbitt at Carnegie Hall, the ignorant identification of Humanism with the decadent stupid conservatism of fifteen years ago by Theodore Dreiser, the putting to work again by H. L. Mencken of his overworked phrases like "vague and witless blather" left no doubt whatever of the middle-aged rebels' lack of stuff to meet the new issues. Most assuredly the containing forms of the New Humanism can cope with this decadent revolt movement, and have plenty of vacant space too. It is to the younger generation of literary thinkers that one must turn in hope of a real resistance, and its performance likewise was keenly disappointing—the repetition of stale attitudes for the most part. There was a lack of curiosity, *a pronounced desire to reject and not the hunger of youth to assimilate and pass beyond if possible,* that was distinctly discouraging to observe. The New Humanists may well call out for good enemies: if I judge them correctly, they have no taste for hollow victories.

To illustrate in the particular field of literature what I have been contending: the younger generation thought that one of the important issues involved a defence of contemporary American writing. But the real issue is how may things work together for the greater glory of American literature. On that all should unite, and to-

ward it each should make contribution. The rest is a question of judgment of contemporary production. There is a Hollywood anecdote that seems to make clear the differences in judgment involved on this point. A new motion picture had been given its first showing, and the magnate had asked his three advisers for opinions. "Stupendous," said the first. "Colossal! Unexcelled! Unsurpassable!" the second replied. The third said in a low tone: "Excuse me, sir, but to me that picture was merely great." The New Humanist appears to be that third man judging current American letters: to him our writing is "merely great."

The signs of the day should tell the younger literary generation to beware of forming a new league of mediocrity to succeed the old.

The better path now for the spirit of revolt would seem to be *through* Humanism. Revolt to be effective must be more than a mere spilling over weak barriers. You must have worthy forms and trammels to give force to your new endeavor. You must be contained before you can overflow with any meaning of importance to the future. To state it another way, the thorough assimilation of Humanism is the next step.

That there are gaps in Humanism I have pointed out. They are ways of egress to those who cannot be content within the Humanist doctrine and discipline. But as they imply in turn the assuming of a more severe discipline and form, I do not fancy an enthusiastic greeting for them from an opposition with the naïve faith in man of the present rejecters of the New Humanism. There is no way

out for the addicts of milk for babes. "The feeble ask for liberty; the strong ask for rule." Nietzsche, thou shouldst be living at this hour, when "independence, free development, and *laisser-aller* are claimed the most vehemently precisely by those for whom no restraint *would be too severe.*"

In somewhat mythological language I have been saying that there are certain possibilities of great development not inherent in the present state of American culture. To come within reach of other possibilities we must change to a state that holds them. Matthew Arnold noted that "in the Greece of Pindar and Sophocles, in the England of Shakespeare, the poet lived in a current of ideas in the highest degree animating and nourishing to the creative power; society was, in the fullest measure, permeated by fresh thought, intelligent and alive. And this state of things," he added, "is the true basis for the creative power's exercise, in this it finds its data, its materials, truly ready for its hand; all the books and reading in the world are only valuable as they are helps to this." This happy state Arnold had to judge was among the possibilities excluded by the condition of English culture in the nineteenth century, and there seems no ground, alas, to believe that it exists among the possibilities now open to American culture. But Arnold did consider it possible to initiate an intermediate phase in English life.

"Even," he said, "when this (state of things described above) does not actually exist, books and reading may enable a man to construct a kind of semblance of it in his own

mind, a world of knowledge and intelligence in which he may live and work. This is by no means an equivalent to the artist for the nationally diffused life and thought of the epochs of Sophocles or Shakespeare, but besides that it may be a means of preparation for such epochs, it does really constitute, if many share in it, a quickening and sustaining atmosphere of great value." Arnold proceeded then to cite an example of this second and possible state. "Such an atmosphere the many-sided learning and the long and widely-combined critical effort of Germany formed for Goethe, when he lived and worked. There was no national glow of life and thought there as in the Athens of Pericles or the England of Elizabeth. That was the poet's weakness. But there was a sort of equivalent for it in the complete culture and unfettered thinking of a large body of Germans. That was his strength."

It is plain that America has yet to reach that state, and that furthermore a great deal of work by all minds will be necessary to bring her there. No one would argue otherwise. But the sense of urgency one would expect is not noticeably present. We do not seem to realize that we must accelerate our pace of work. There is, so to speak, plenty of slack on the tether of our culture, and we are not running it out with any admirable rapidity. Else, so I think, we would be welcoming the contribution of the Humanists with eagerness and not with resentment.

As it is, we lag and flounder. We are, to take a common instance from literature, prone to make late importations of European tendencies which have already been fully worked out abroad. Consider the vogue of the

Dreiserian novel: it is written in America several decades after the Zolaesque novel has been thoroughly studied in France. We import the method of naturalistic fiction—late; we do not import simultaneously the criticism of the method, but go blundering on as if nothing had been previously learned from the experiment. The New Humanists ask us not to be so tardy in a detail like this but to learn more quickly of the past, that is, to *consciously* create the field of our present out of the best available past. In my opinion, the Humanists can more quickly release us from a multitude of opinions now holding us back than any other American school of thought current. They should enable us to get to the end of our tether that much sooner.

It was clear some time before this point that I do not regard American Humanism as a final resting place. So far as I champion the New Humanists, it is because they can enormously further reaching the end of our present phase. Let us put that end very high. Let us say it is a state of culture as high as that ascribed by Arnold to the Germany of Goethe, or perhaps better, say it is the equal of eighteenth century culture in England, the century Arnold underestimated. Observe I do not say identical with, but equal to, in quality. This achievement for me represents the end of the rope. Because then we shall have thoroughly digested all the ideas of the Western mind from the Greeks to Bertrand Russell: we will be familiar with them all, be able brilliantly to reshuffle them and deal out clever new hands for ourselves. But the game will be always the same—always a preliminary

game. For the reason that there is not now current in the Western world *a single new seminiferous principle for human culture.* There may be one accessible, but if so, it is certainly not current. We know or shall know all the existing ideas and there is not a comprehensive regenerating idea in the ensemble. In our present phase we are limited to old ideas and our understanding or misunderstanding of old ideas. We cannot expect a revolutionary change—how can we?—when we have nothing to change ourselves with.

Furthermore, we are not at all ripe for that inward transformation, the only right way to an outward social transformation, the business for us and for our age—according to Arnold. The sense of need for it has not even been born. We have to reach by intense activity the end of the situation in which we are cast before a new situation can begin with its fresh group of possibilities. We have to need something before we can acquire it. The birth of a new need—that alone will profoundly alter the present drift and provide an unexpected future tense for things.

I return to the metaphor of the end of the tether. Most people know now and then the state that it expresses—a compound of well-being, distress and the greatest alertness. Well-being, because one has utilized every resource, put forth every ounce of effort, thought of every possible scheme, done the very best one could to cope with the circumstances. Distress, because the best one has is insufficient for the emergency, because one is at one's wits' end, because one needs more power within or help from with-

out to forestall disaster. The greatest alertness, because in one's desperation one overlooks nothing, one is willing to try anything, one racks oneself for a new plan. In that state one is most realistic, most clear about means and ends, most determined, most dissatisfied, straining at the leash of one's limitations.

The condition of being at the end of the tether, torn between despair and the highest hopes, preternaturally awake to any means promising deliverance, marks for me the highest point a Western culture can now attain. It is both the one truly fertile state and a pure cry for deliverance from iron restrictions. It goes without saying that American culture is distant from it. Who will say we experience now the need born of such a state for whole orders of ideas that appear in a time of Renascence, when we have not exhausted our present orders of thought? We are from all appearances so comfortable and optimistic—shall I add slothful?—that even American Humanism is too strong a potion at the present time. We have the illusion of being free while we are in fact tethered at a comparatively short range. Our progress must consist in finding out the length of our tether, and for that Humanism is one of the most available means. The Great Revolt will be the revolt against the limits of Humanism as new vistas of action, thought and being become discernible beyond the end of the tether. But just now our energies appear to be all engaged in the lesser warfare between Naturalism and Humanism.

It is nevertheless certain that what has here been named the dilemma of the liberated will emerge more and more

strikingly as time goes on, for the pressures of the situation itself will steadily extrude it. Their own experience and reflection will compel a larger and larger vanguard of Americans to see at the one extremity the pitfalls of romantic heterodoxy and at the other the major defects of classical orthodoxy. Painting psychological serfdom in alluring colors will not seduce their judgment, nor will they be convinced that the full secret for making freemen has been entrusted to the New Humanists. Of the organized religions they will ask, not solace which might be given, but a hammer to smite man's shackles, and the hammer will not be forthcoming.

But disagreeable as such a dilemma is, it is a great awakener. It is a challenge to find a means of circumvention. To circumvent it, however, we shall assuredly have to reach the end of our present resources. It can not be resolved on any terms less exacting.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I HAD thought to append a selected bibliography of books bearing on American Humanism, but there seems little point in duplicating here—with certain subtractions and a few additions—the bibliography at the back of *Humanism and America.* That now historic symposium—and I am greatly indebted to the publishers, Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., for their permission to make excerpts from it—will probably aid the reader hitherto unread in the New Humanism to become acquainted in the quickest fashion with the leading personalities among the New Humanists and the extensive ramification of their views. Such a reader should, however, if he is the man to hoe a long row, press on to the complete works of Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More. Houghton Mifflin and Co. have kindly allowed me to quote from several of Babbitt's books and from the later volumes of More's *Shelburne Essays,* as well as from *Mont-St.-Michel and Chartres* by Henry Adams. I wish to acknowledge with thanks other favors of the like kind received from the following:

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I may add that the American reader who enjoys following the progress of a literary controversy as the French appear to enjoy their polemical outbreaks will find the pages of the *Bookman* from month to month alive with the debating points of the New Humanists.

For further information on the Douglas Proposals spoken of rather hopefully in the chapter on Humanism and economics, see *Unemployment or War* by Maurice Colbourne, published by Coward-McCann, Inc.

Finally, I will name a very few books that have been of great service to me in forming my own point of view as distinct from the humanistic viewpoint. They are, in metaphysics, *The Three Conventions* by Denis Saurat, published by the Dial Press; in psychology, *Beyond Behaviorism* by Robert Courtney, brought out by Grant Publications, Inc.; in literature, *Readers and Writers* and *The Art of Reading,* both by A. R. Orage, the former published by Knopf, and the latter by Farrar and Rinehart, Inc.

G. M.

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